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MARVEL

SH

[_realm_x]
[_of____x]

[fall_of_x]



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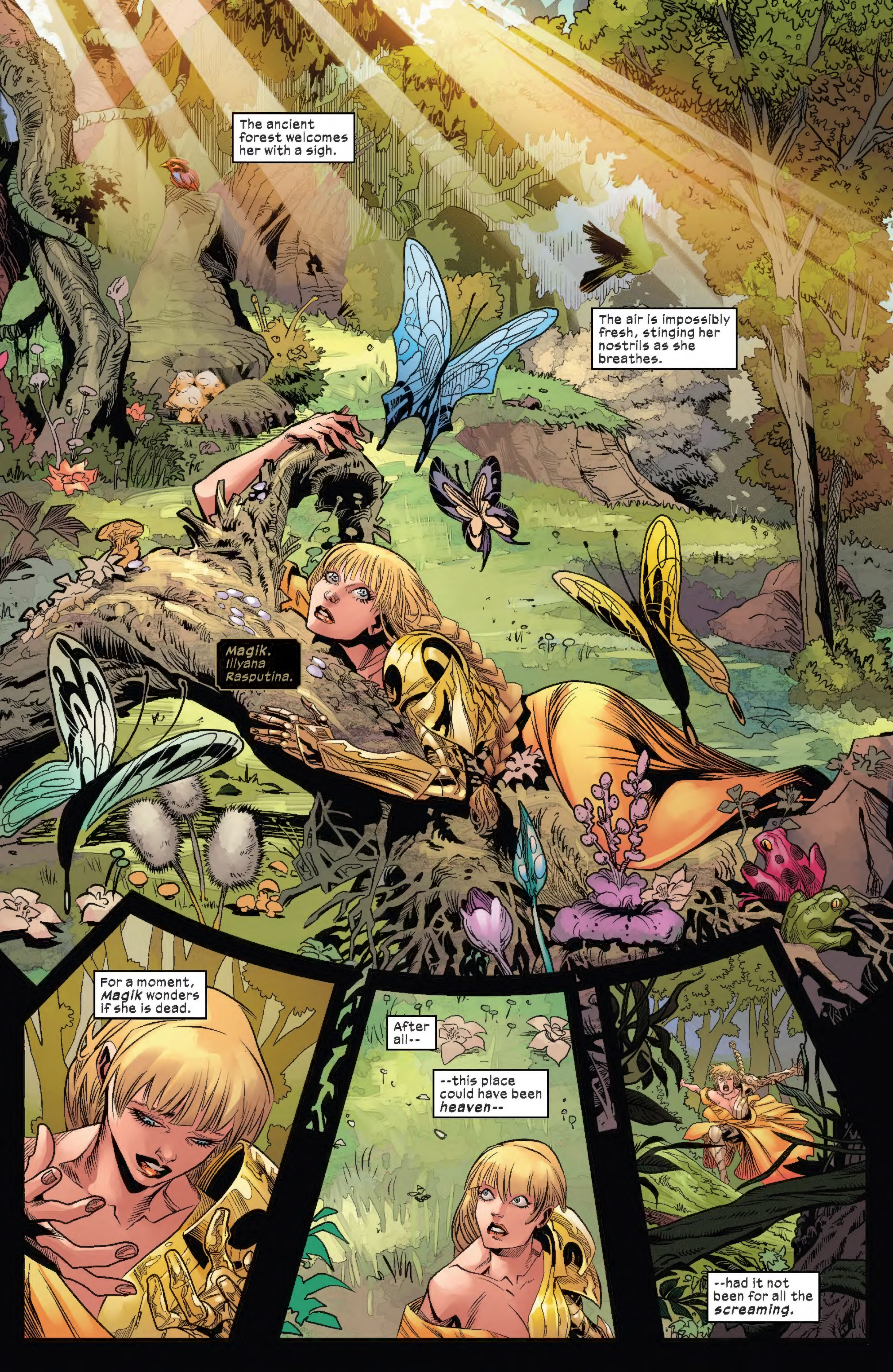




REALM
OF



REALM
OF

A woman with blonde hair, wearing a yellow and orange outfit, is lying on her back in a lush, sunlit forest. She is looking up at the sky with a surprised expression. Several large, colorful butterflies (blue, purple, yellow, and white) are flying around her. The forest floor is covered in green grass, flowers, and mushrooms. Sunlight beams through the trees, creating a warm, golden atmosphere. In the background, there are more trees and a small stream.

The ancient forest welcomes her with a sigh.

The air is impossibly fresh, stinging her nostrils as she breathes.

Magik.
Illyana Rasputina.

For a moment, **Magik** wonders if she is dead.

After all--

--this place could have been **heaven**--

--had it not been for all the **screaming**.

Magik does not know where she is, but there are familiar faces in the sea of strangers.

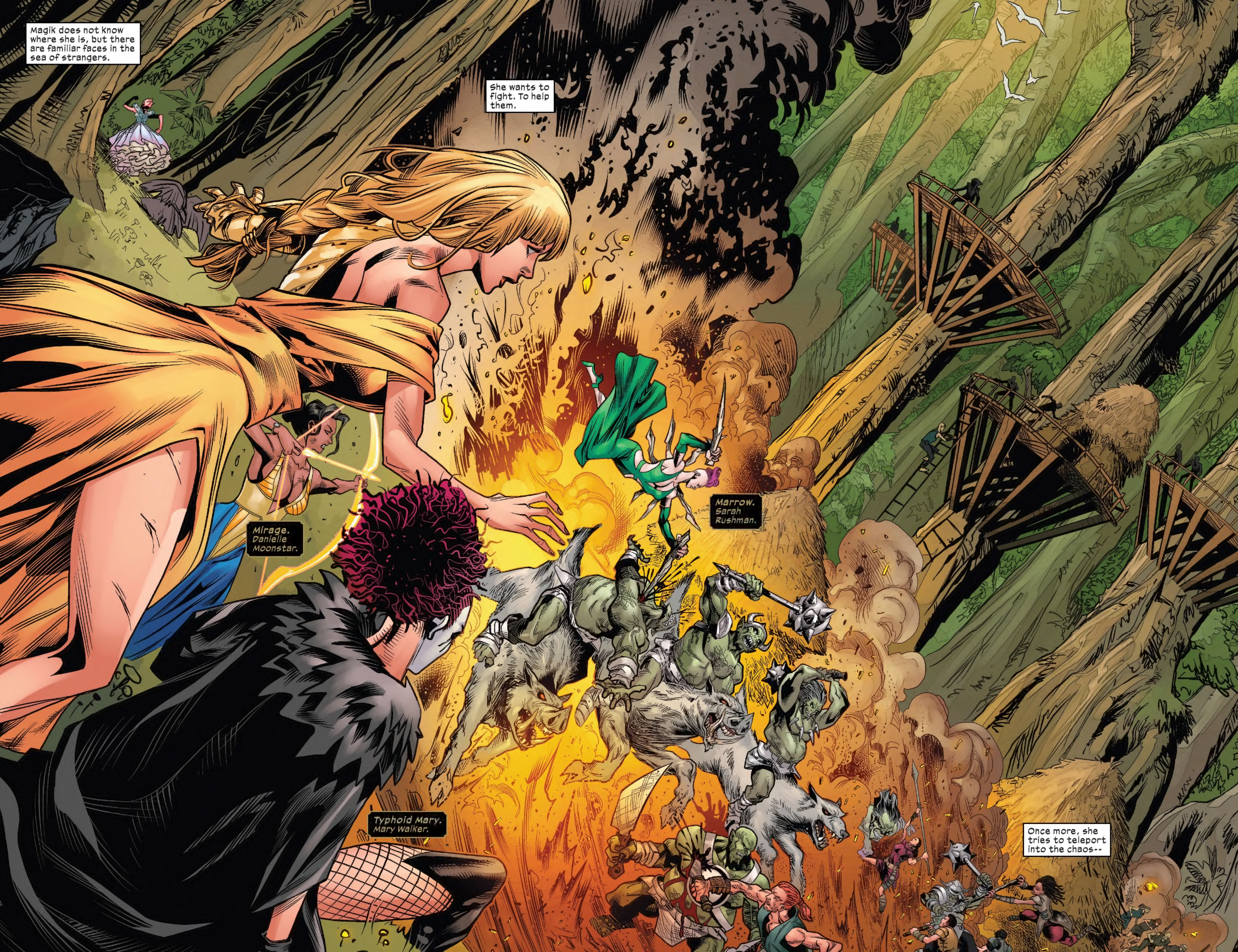
She wants to fight. To help them.

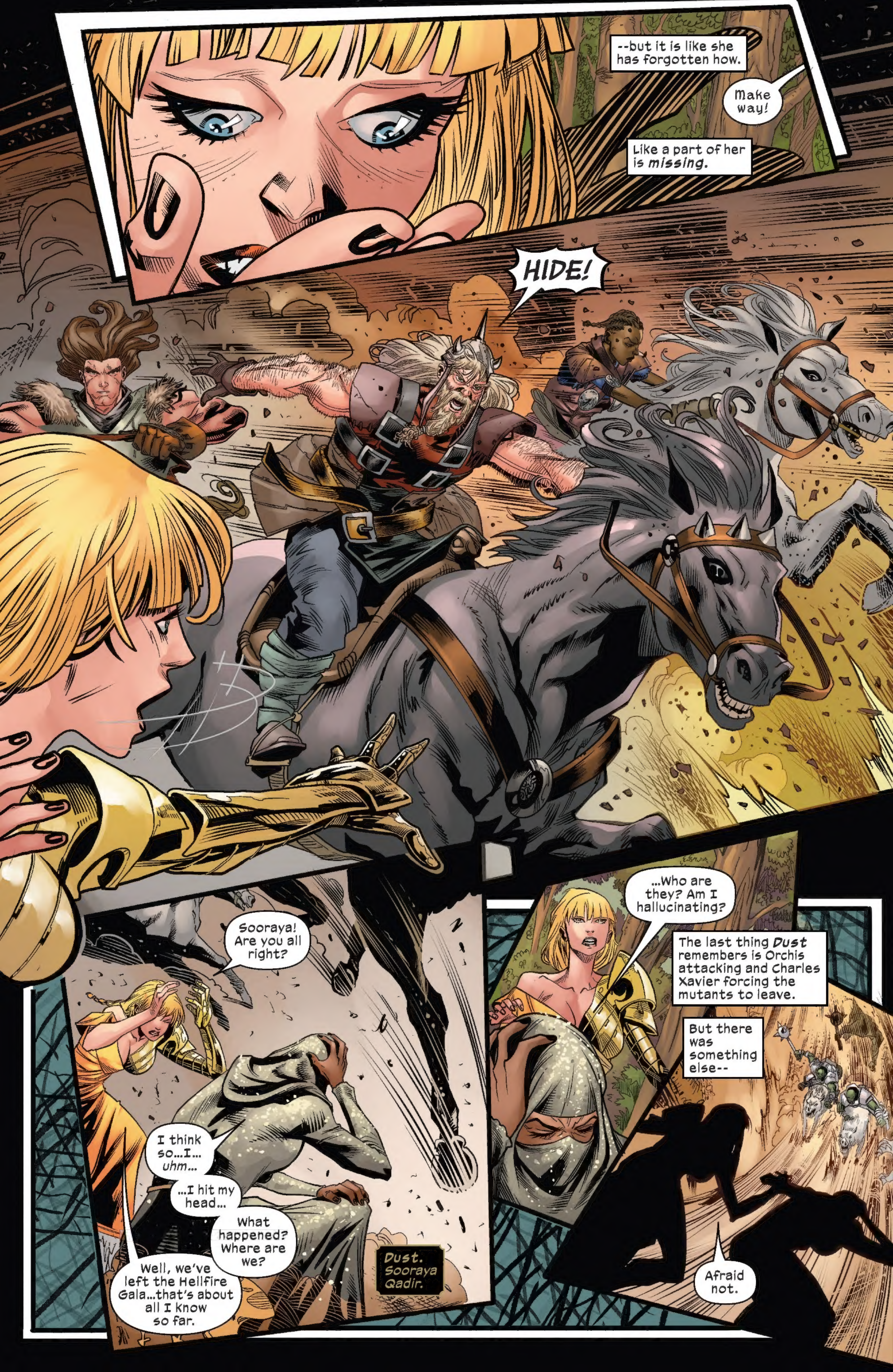
Mirage.
Danielle Moonstar.

Marrow.
Sarah Rushman.

Typhoid Mary.
Mary Walker.

Once more, she tries to teleport into the chaos--





--but it is like she has forgotten how.

Make way!

Like a part of her is missing.

HIDE!

Sooraya! Are you all right?

I think so...I... uhm...

...I hit my head...

What happened? Where are we?

Well, we've left the Hellfire Gala...that's about all I know so far.

Dust. Sooraya Qadir.

...Who are they? Am I hallucinating?

The last thing *Dust* remembers is Orchis attacking and Charles Xavier forcing the mutants to leave.

But there was something else--

Afraid not.

A voice.
Words
spoken.

Typhoid Mary!
Are you just going
to sit there?

Hey...this
isn't my fight...
I don't even know
where the %*%#%
we are.

And then they were
pulled from the world.

Mary!
Can you please **DO**
SOMETHING?!

She does not
know this place--

Now
that is
funny.

Mary!

My powers...
I don't have...
access to
them at the
moment.

What about
Magik? She's
not doing
anything.

Eh, I
don't...

I would fight, Dani,
darling--

--but
who is the
enemy?

How do
we know whom
to fight?

--nor
these
people...

When someone
attacks with
overwhelming force,
they're usually the
bad guys.

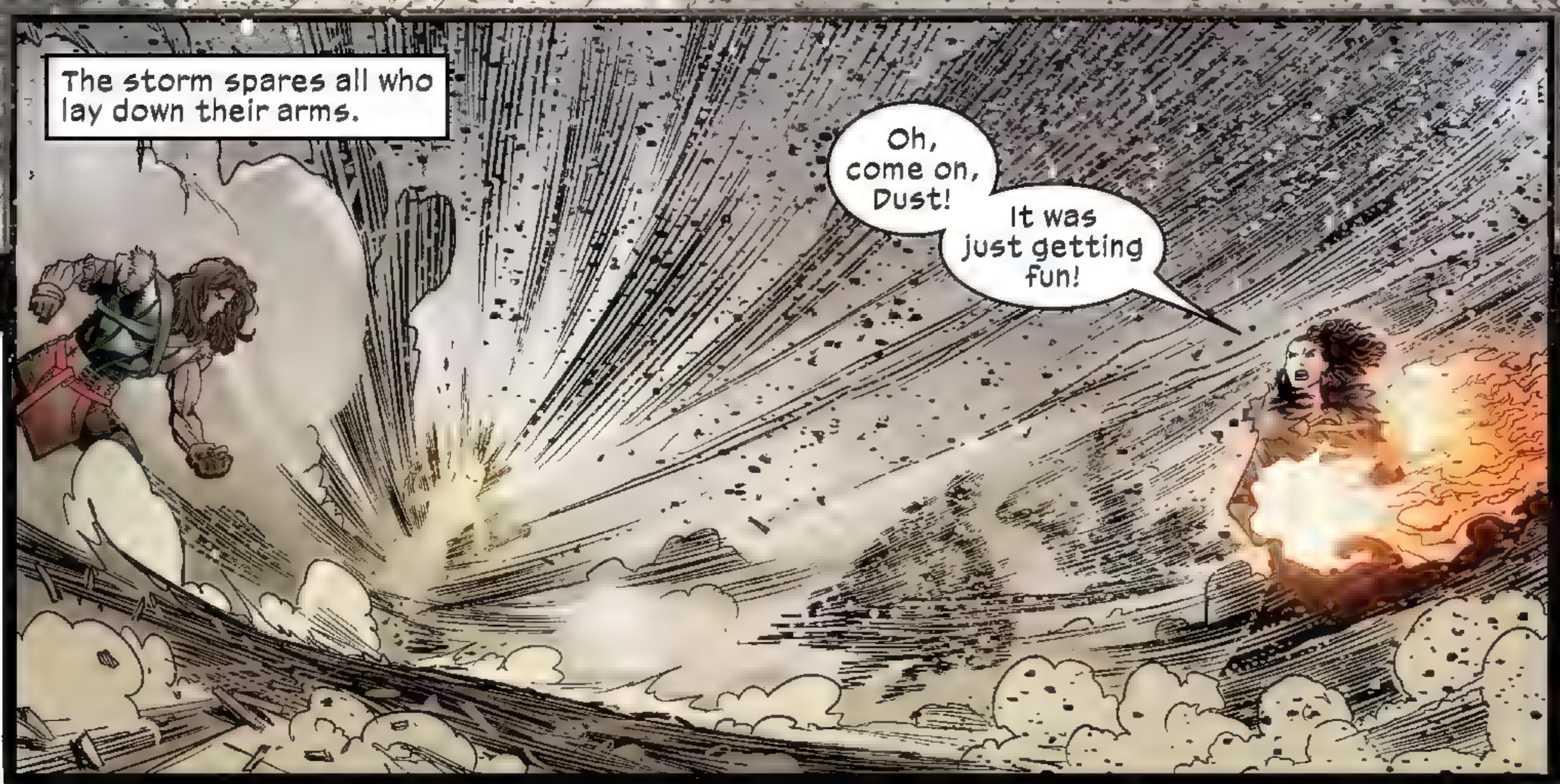
And though Dani
Moonstar makes
sense, Dust
wonders:







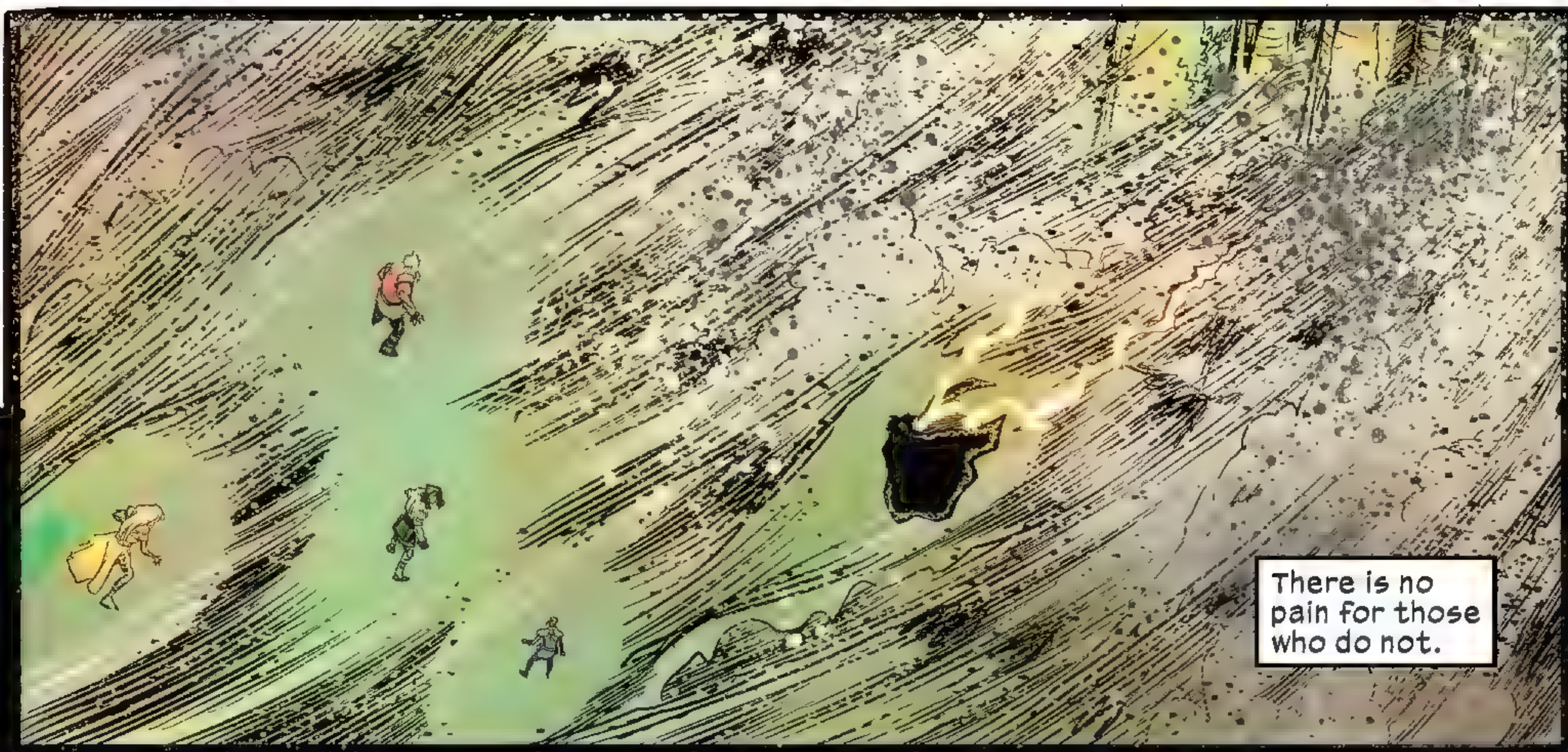
Very well.



The storm spares all who lay down their arms.

Oh, come on, Dust!

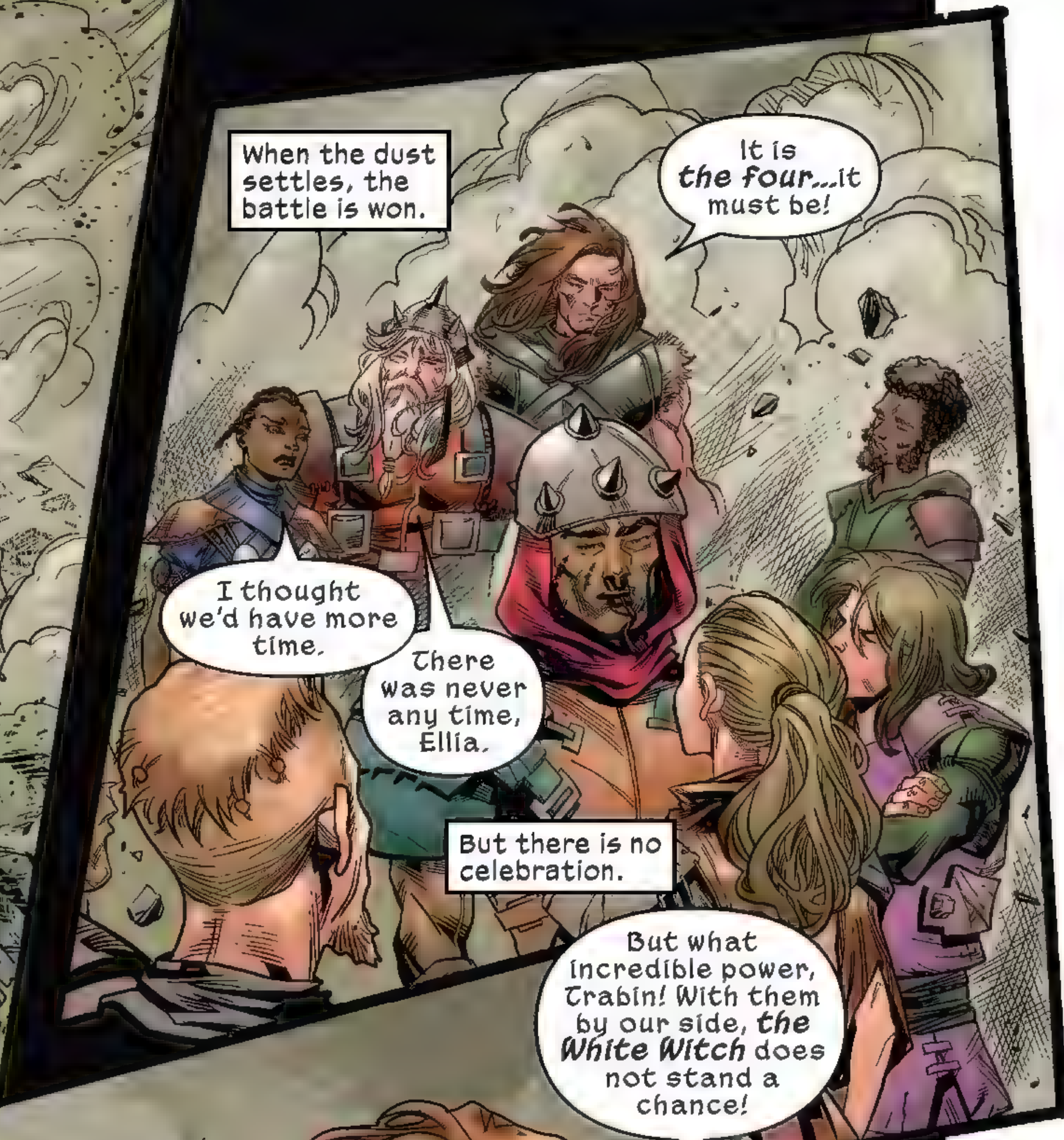
It was just getting fun!



There is no pain for those who do not.



Why did I even get up?



When the dust settles, the battle is won.

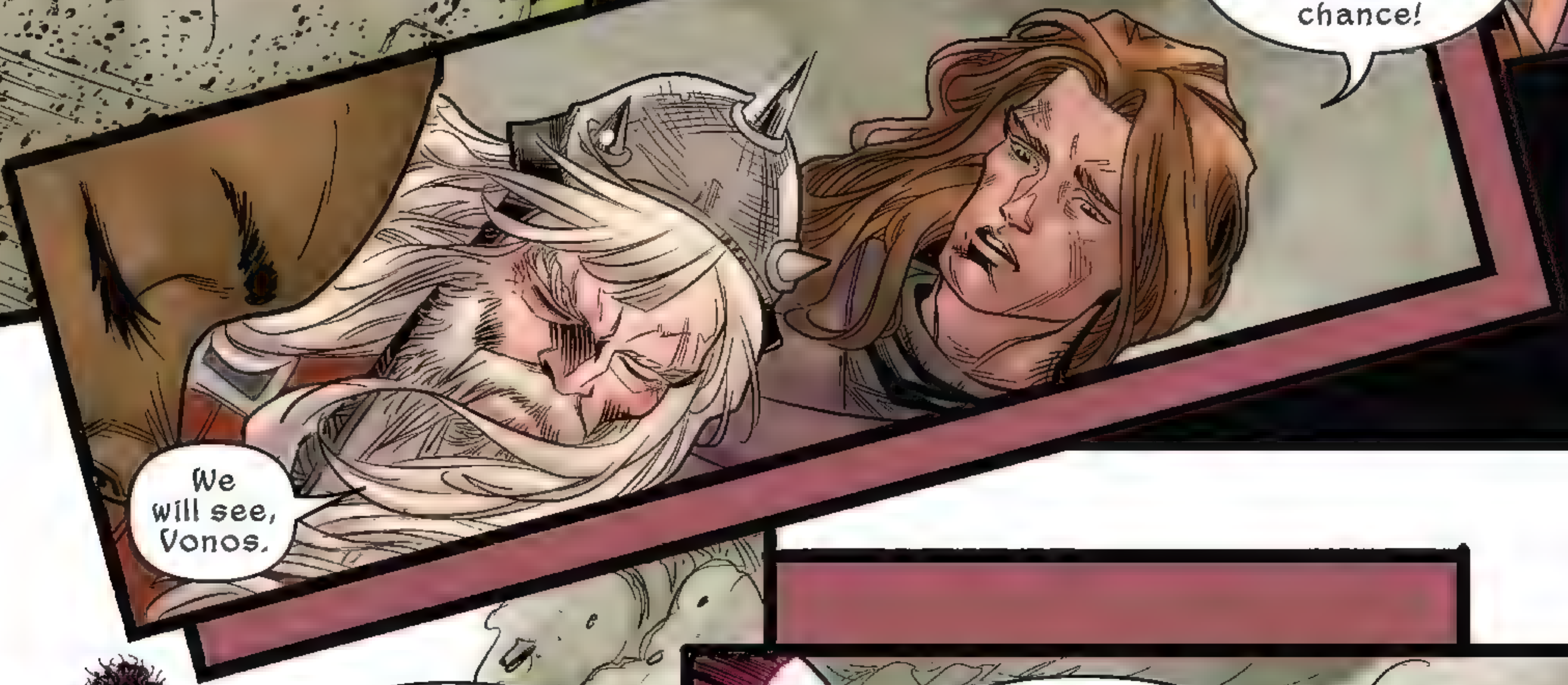
It is *the four*...it must be!

I thought we'd have more time.

There was never any time, Ellia.

But there is no celebration.

But what incredible power, Trabin! With them by our side, *the White Witch* does not stand a chance!

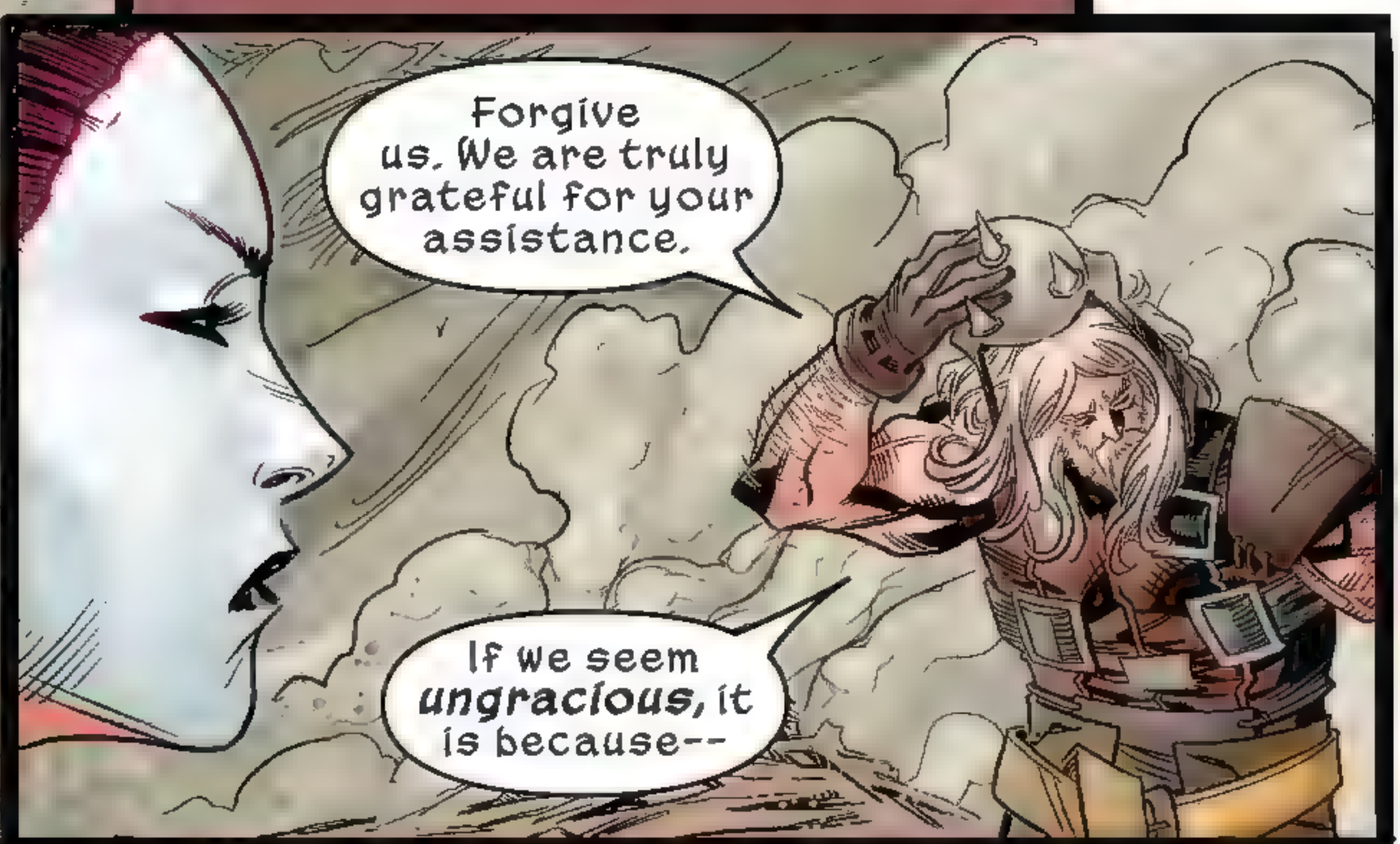


We will see, Vonos.



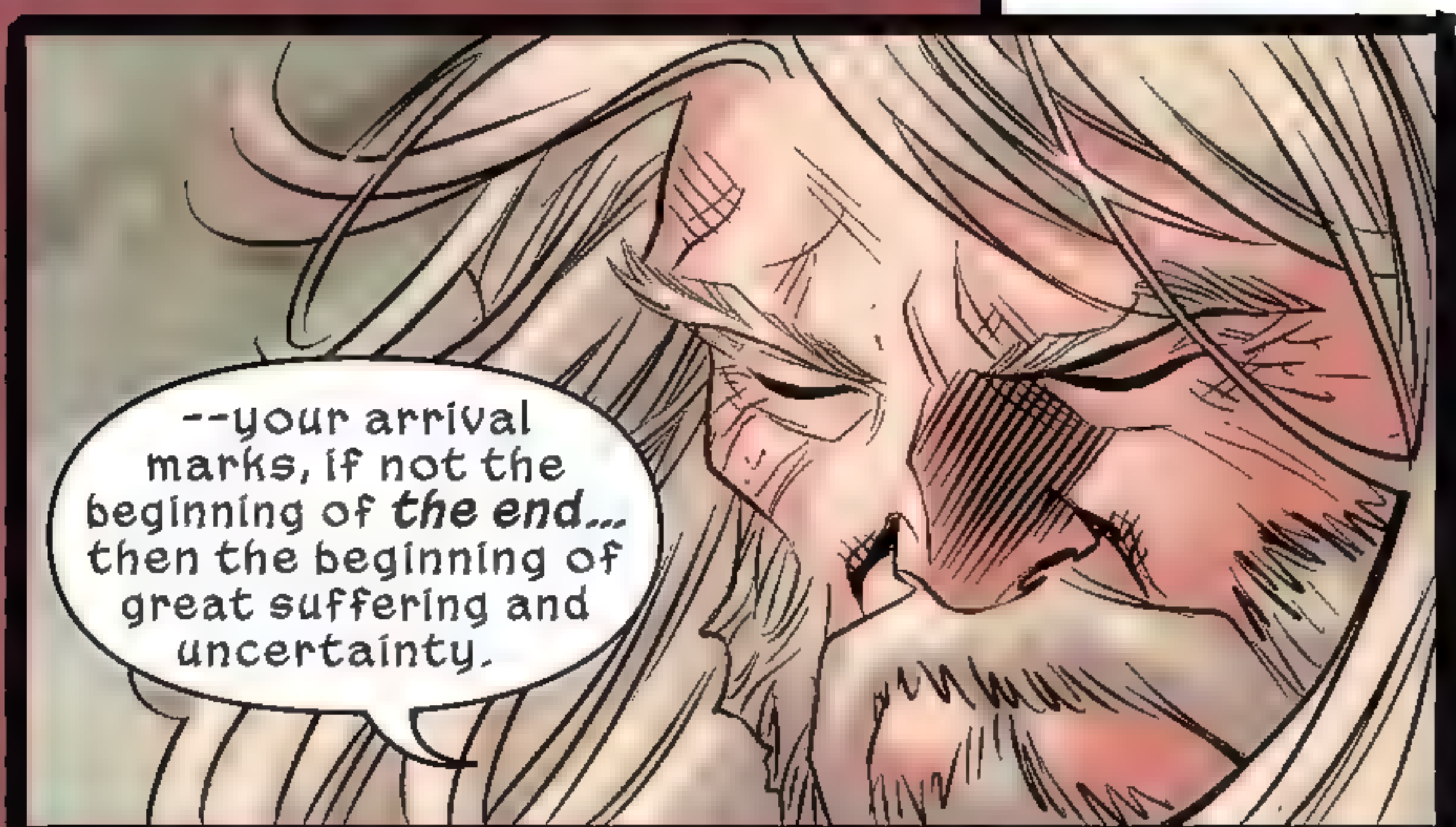
I think the words you're looking for are *thank you*.

Merci? Danke? Grazie? Obrigado? Takk?



Forgive us. We are truly grateful for your assistance.

If we seem *ungracious*, it is because--



--your arrival marks, if not the beginning of *the end*... then the beginning of great suffering and uncertainty.



What the hell
is that supposed
to mean?

Question.
Where are
we?

Please forgive
me. I am Trabin,
leader of House
Mult.

Allow me
to welcome
you to *Vanaheim*,
one of the Ten
Realms.



van-what-now?

Vanaheim?!
That cannot
be...

We have
been expecting
you.

We will
answer your
questions as best
we can, though, I
warn you, we do
not have all the
answers.

But
first, I must
ask--

--is the
one you call
Curse with
you?



She was...
she was in my
arms.

Curse?

Stop being
such a little @!%#
and get out here,
Curse.

she was
here...!

CURSE!

FALL OF X

VIOLENCE OF VICTORY

What should have been a joyful night welcoming the newly elected X-Men team and celebrating mutantkind turned into a nightmare following Orchis' vicious assault at the Hellfire Gala. In an act of desperation, Professor Xavier used his powers to force as many mutants as he could to walk through the nearest Krakoaan gates in the hope of sending them to safety.

Magik, Mirage, Dust, Curse, Typhoid Mary and a handful of other mutants were among those who walked through the gates, but while they managed to escape one battle, they seem to have fallen straight into another. Only now they have no idea where in the universe they are -- and with Magik's teleportation powers on the fritz, they truly have no way home.

- 1___[MAGIK]
- 2___[MIRAGE]
- 3___[TYPHOID MARY]
- 4___[DUST]
- 5___[MARROW]
- 6___[CURSE]





The White Witch



Moments before.

Curse is delighted.

All those troll things on piggies sure made her escape a lot easier.

She does not know *where* she is.

Only that she is far away from Magik's grip and Xavier's stupid yapping.

And though she is vaguely aware that she is completely lost--

--it feels like a problem for **Future Curse**.

GGGRRRRRRRR--



She does not feel it, but there is anticipation in the air.

Doggies!

Eager eyes watch her every movement.



You want a stick?



No.



Ball?



...Curse?

Rrrroooowlll.

Ugh, your breath stinks.
Wash your mouth.

Waiting.
Hoping.



That's better.

And when the *jinx* hits--

Yip!

Yip!

Yip!

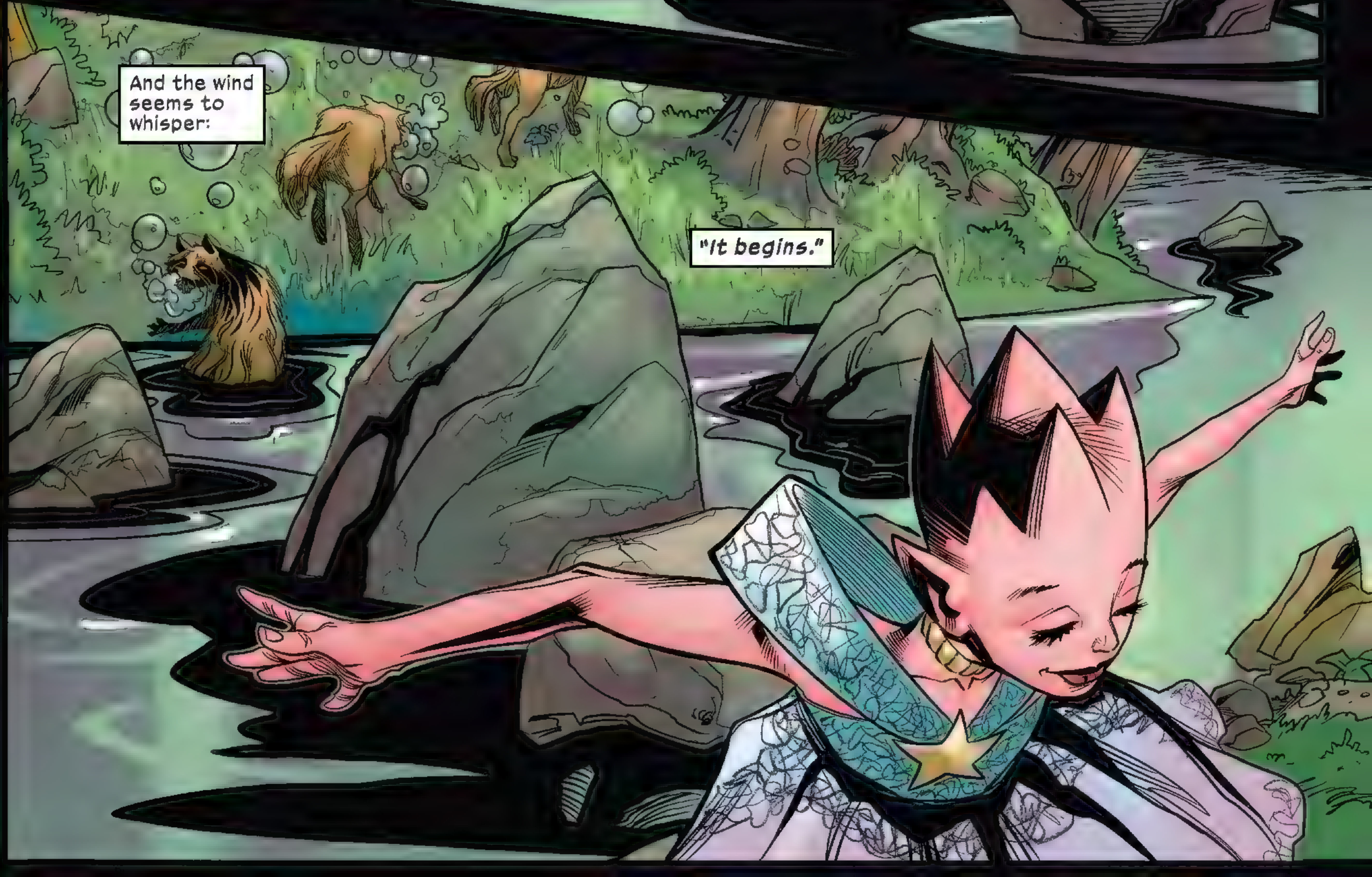
You'll thank me later!

--there is relief.

Excitement.

And the wind seems to whisper:

"It begins."





These boots
were made for *standing*
on red carpets.

And
resting on *silk*
sheets.

They were
not made for
dirt--

--and
dung--

--and
stone--

--and--

My
horse
is at your
disposal,
Lady
Mary.



Do I look
like an equestrian
to you?

Oh, there
is nothing
to it.



Get
your hands
off me!



Just hold
on. I will lead
him.

You...!

I...



Danielle Moonstar reaches for the minds of the creatures near her.

Unspoken questions are answered through invisible bonds.

They have not seen the child.

Is that better?

Do not speak to me.

They have not seen Curse.

But they are willing to help.

--Besides, if Trabin's men can't find her, Sooraya will. She can cover more ground than anyone.

Any news from the animals, Dani?

Not yet, but they will join the search.

I wish I could do... something.

You are, Ilyana. We have a dozen wounded mutants who need your assistance. You are getting them to safety.

Magik feels helpless.

Do you think she is scared?

Curse? No.

If anything, it is Vanaheim that should worry.

(And guilty.)

They might be doing everything they can to find her.

But the forest is endless--

--the sun is setting--

Welcome to House Mult.

You will be safe here. We have arranged beds for the wounded, and dinner will be served shortly.

When you said you were the leader of *a house*, I thought you meant... you know--

--an actual house.

Goodness' sake, Mary.

--and she knows that no one will find Curse--

--unless she wants to be found.

There it is. Finally. Waiting all day.

It is scrawny.





You... hurt us?

And between us, if someone is going to get hurt, trollies, it is not going to be me.



Only if you try to hurt me. We could be *friends*, you know.

Maybe we can share the potatoes? I'm getting hungry, and there's, like, no restaurants anywhere.

It is trying to trick us.

Maybe it is a joke.



Hey! I know a good joke.

Why did the rock troll break up with her boyfriend?

He took her for *granite*.

Get it?



Not funny.

You wouldn't know humor if it hit you in the face, *you useless piles of stone.*

Flesh and bone turns to stone. (And the trollies hurt.)

House Multi,
one hour later.



Oh for
f%\$@'s sake,
Dust.



I was eating
that!

I searched
the entire west side,
but I could find no sign
of her. What about
Trabin's men?

His scouts
should be back
soon.

What have
you learned
so far?

That MSG
is the true
meaning of
life?

That corn
syrup gets a
bad rap?

I would
sell my soul
for a burger
right now.

Mhm. The forest is a battlefield.
Most of the houses I came
across were burned and
abandoned.

How are the
wounded?

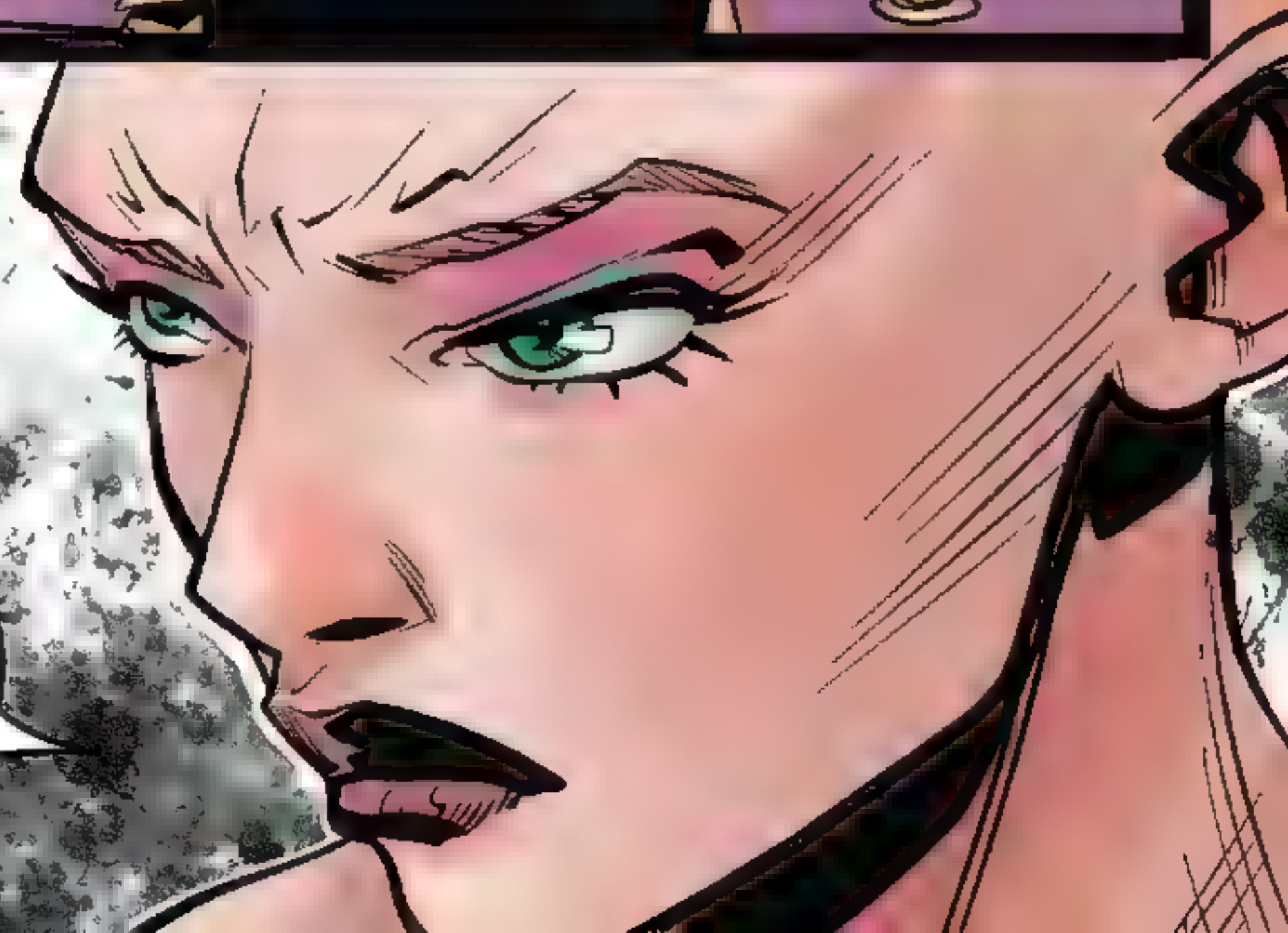
Looks like everyone will be all right.
Some broken bones, but nothing
life-threatening. The Vanir healers
are taking care of them--



Well, we
landed in the middle
of a civil war between
the Vanir and someone
they call the
White Witch.

--but I would
like to know how
they knew we were
coming...how they knew
the exact number
of hospital beds
to prepare.

I mean,
they'd been
expecting us?
What does that
even mean?





Well, Vanaheim is a realm of *divination*.

Premonitions and prophecy are a fact of life here.

Bargain-bin Boromir is coming.



Your soldiers are on high alert.

Are you expecting hostility?



Always. Our seers can predict her attacks to a certain point, but--

--it can be hard to interpret their visions correctly.

And it is... **disheartening** for our soldiers to know too much.



We know **something** is coming today. Our forces are prepared. That is enough.

Is this the **White Witch**? The same who attacked us earlier today?

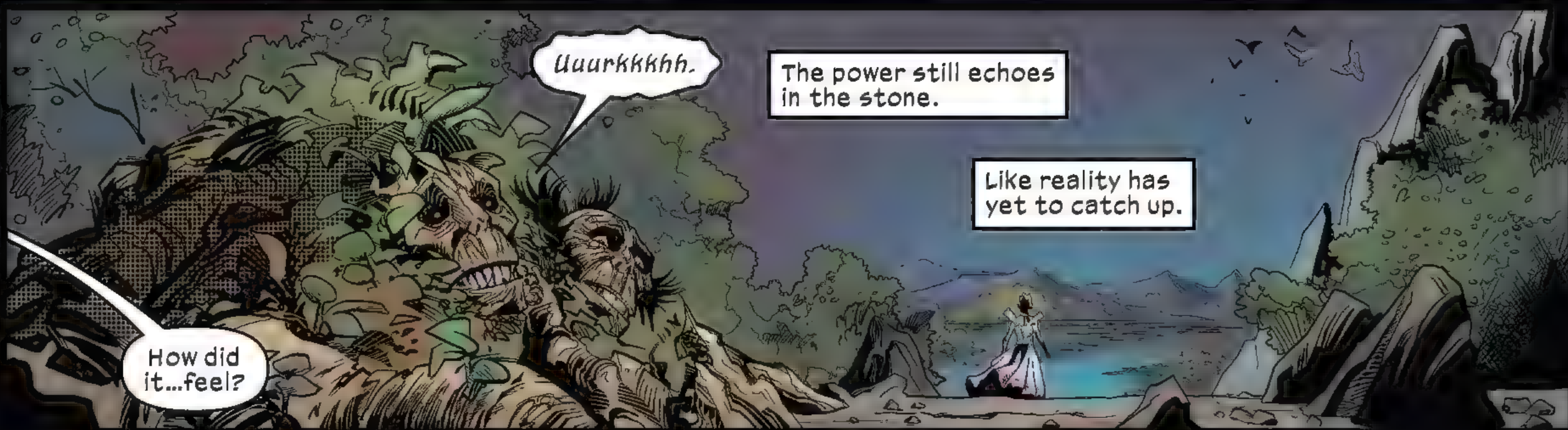
Indeed.



Your **seers**...is that how you knew that we were coming?

Well, yes and no.

I think it's time you told us everything you know.



Uuurkkkkhh.

The power still echoes
in the stone.

Like reality has
yet to catch up.

How did
it...feel?



The White Witch can
sense it. Smell it.

When she
changed your
very *being*...how
did it feel?

Can't
move my
hand.



You're in
pieces, my
dear.

Can you
put us back
together?

She tries. Gathering
her considerable
power, she attempts
to undo Curse's jinx.



I am...
delighted to say that
I cannot.

Her
powers are quite
extraordinary.

The girl
said *we* would
hurt...

...or
she would
hurt.



But *we*
hurt.

We
hurt.

Yes. You
hurt. I cannot
help you with
that--

--but do
not worry...I will
make her hurt
too.

For a lifetime, Trabin has wondered what he would say in this moment.

To understand the events of today, we must look to the past.

The Vanir used to live in cities as big as countries. Our technology and weapons rivaled those of Asgard.

How he would explain the nature of this realm...how the future is in the very air they breathe--



But our strength came with **attention**. Unrest. War.

We saw **the future**. We saw what awaited us if we did not act.

--how it guides them.

So we changed. Changed the fate of the realm. Left the cities to ruins and chose a simpler existence.

Ever think you might have overcorrected?



Be quiet, Mary.

That was the **first time** the demise of Vanaheim was prophesied.

The second... begins with **you**.



And how lost they feel now that it has gone dark.

Mirage, Marrow, Dust and Typhoid Mary. If you would follow me to the library.



No, thanks. I am over this unsolicited history lesson.

Please, Mary. I think what you are about to see will interest you.

Magik is coming too.



Prophecy in Warfare

The use of divination as a strategic tool in warfare has yielded variable results throughout history. During the first age, when Iljord, son of Buri, brother of Mimir and Bor, ruled the realm, divination was primarily employed as a means of motivation rather than a tactical resource. Warriors who knew their lives would be forfeit in battle would enter the fray with an unwavering determination to die with honor, fighting with ferocity and unyielding courage.

That was until Kvasir the Wise posed the following questions: *If the warriors had not been privy to the prophecy of their demise, would they have still perished? Or would they have fought with more prudence and survived?*

These questions plagued the Vanir, and the notion of altering destiny rather than submitting to it was born.

This concept was successfully implemented multiple times, most notably on two occasions:

Before the war with Asgard, it is believed that it was the catastrophic prophetic visions of the impending battle that inspired Freyr to seek the aid of Surtur. Historians contend that this decisive act saved Vanaheim in the early stages of the war and enabled the Vanir to hold their ground against the Asgardian forces. When Freyr, renowned for his pride, humbly sought the aid of the fire giant, he acknowledged his own weakness. It is believed that this was the key to changing the fate of the realm.

The second notable event occurred when the Vanir chose to forsake their technological advancements and the luxuries of their citadels in favor of a more modest existence. This decision transformed a future shrouded in war, death and darkness into one of tranquility and peace. It is suggested that the Vanir's collective attrition of comfort and ambition was the catalyst that caused fate to shift.

The question plaguing Vanir scholars now that they look into an uncertain future is what lessons they can learn from the past to change their destiny. The coming war with the White Witch is well-documented in the Library of Prophecies, and for decades, scholars and strategists have studied the events leading up to the battle in the hopes of finding some key moment to change in an attempt to alter fate.

When asked about the issue at hand, Haggard Thunson, First Strategist of Sadran's army, responded as follows:

If the goal is to outsmart fate, it may be necessary to contradict our inherent tendencies. In practical terms, however, I do not know what measures to recommend. Should the Vanir yield to this upstart Witch? Never. We know the Four play a crucial part in the battle to come, but would we deny strangers who seek our help? Or, going one step further, would we kill those who stand ready to help us? I would argue that sacrificing four lives to save the realm is a small price to pay for peace, but it is also hard to believe that peace will grow from bloodshed. War, famously, begets war.

On the other hand, I cannot help but wonder--

--is it the act of inaction that will doom us in the end?



We have seen your arrival for centuries.

This is not unusual in itself, but what is noteworthy is that we cannot see past the events in which you are involved.



And what exactly does this prophecy say?

There will be a battle. The White Witch attacks, and we defend our land.

We know that four of **the strangers** will play a part in it.



But there is an unpredictable element. A chaotic power not even fate seems to understand.

An event. An unleashing of power. After this, the future is lost.

For many years, this force was believed to be a magical object.

But modern scholars have suggested that it could be a **person**.



We have collected all accounts of the prophecy in this library.

It was, at some point, a tradition among our seers to spend time here, trying to figure out the intricacies of this time.

What is... that?!



Is that... us?

HA!



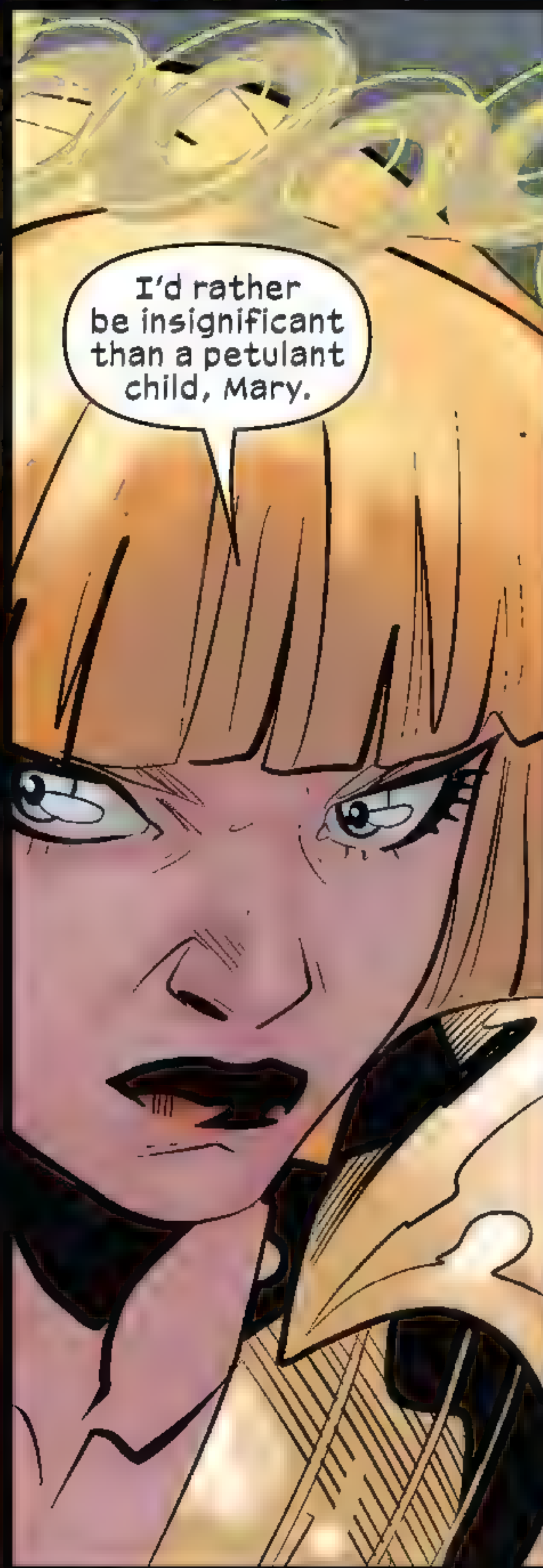
One of the seers had a passion for sculpture, and she sculpted the four strangers as she saw them in her visions.

Poor little Magik.



Even fate deems you insignificant.

The horn!
We are under attack.



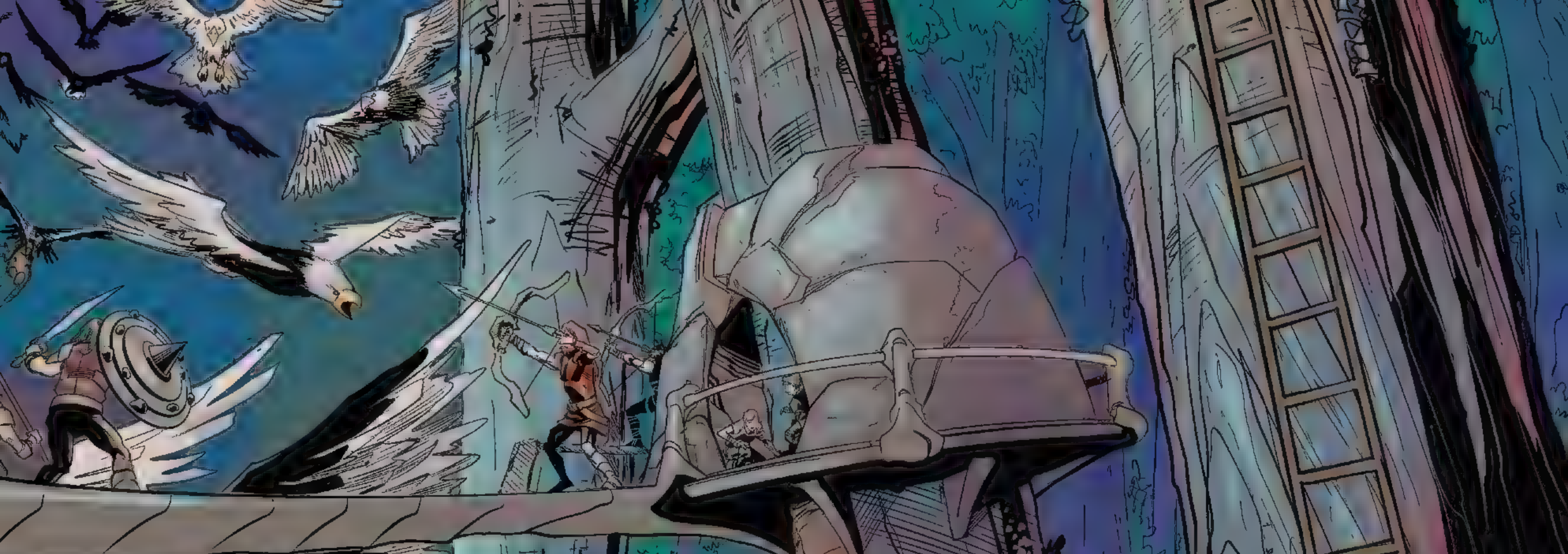
I'd rather be insignificant than a petulant child, Mary.



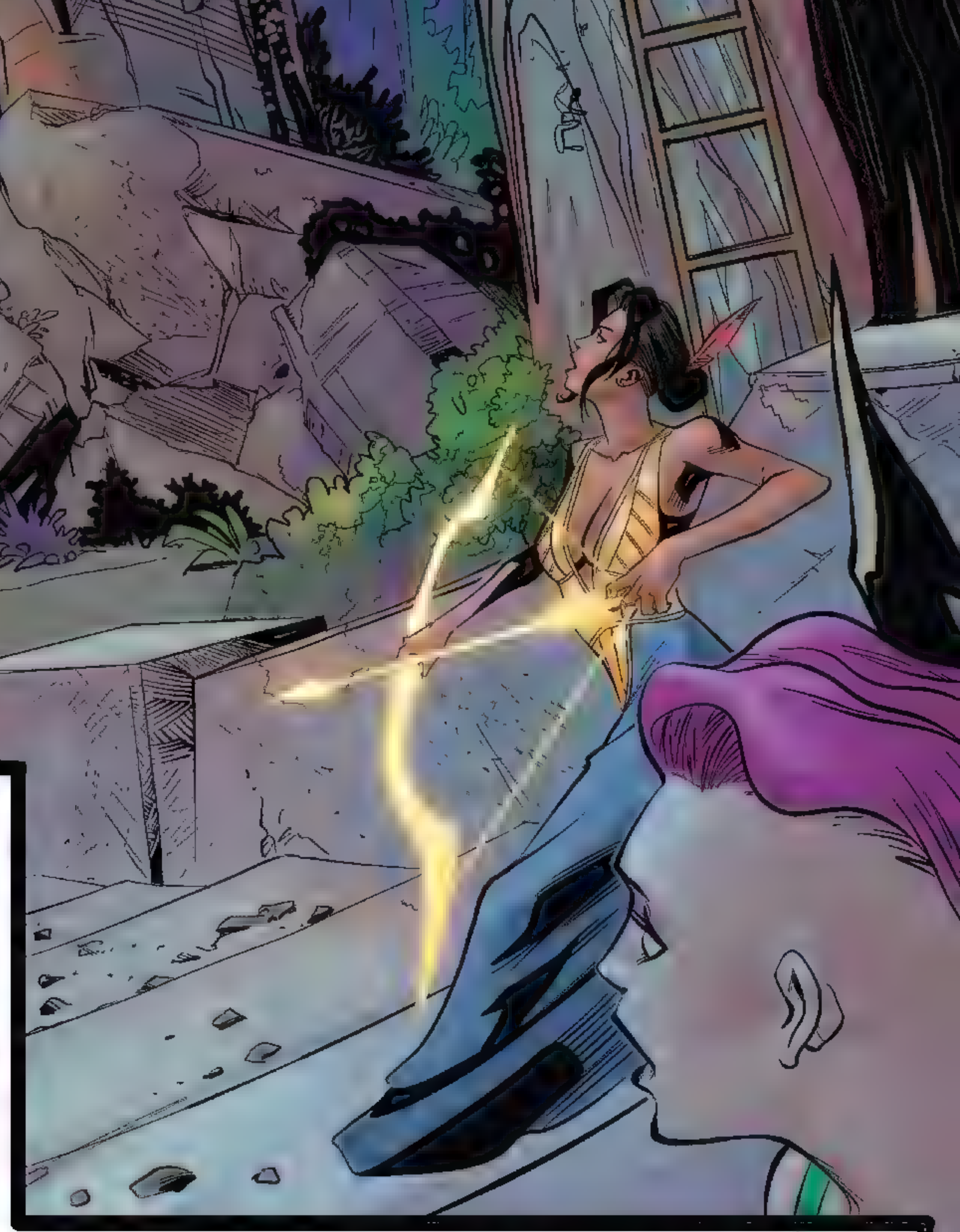
White Eagles!

What are they carrying?
Are those... *people*?
Are they alive?

Marrow's questions are answered by the scent filling the air.



As bodies fall from the sky, the stench of death envelopes them.



Well, I suppose Trabin's scouts are back. Let's hope they didn't find Curse before they were slaughtered.



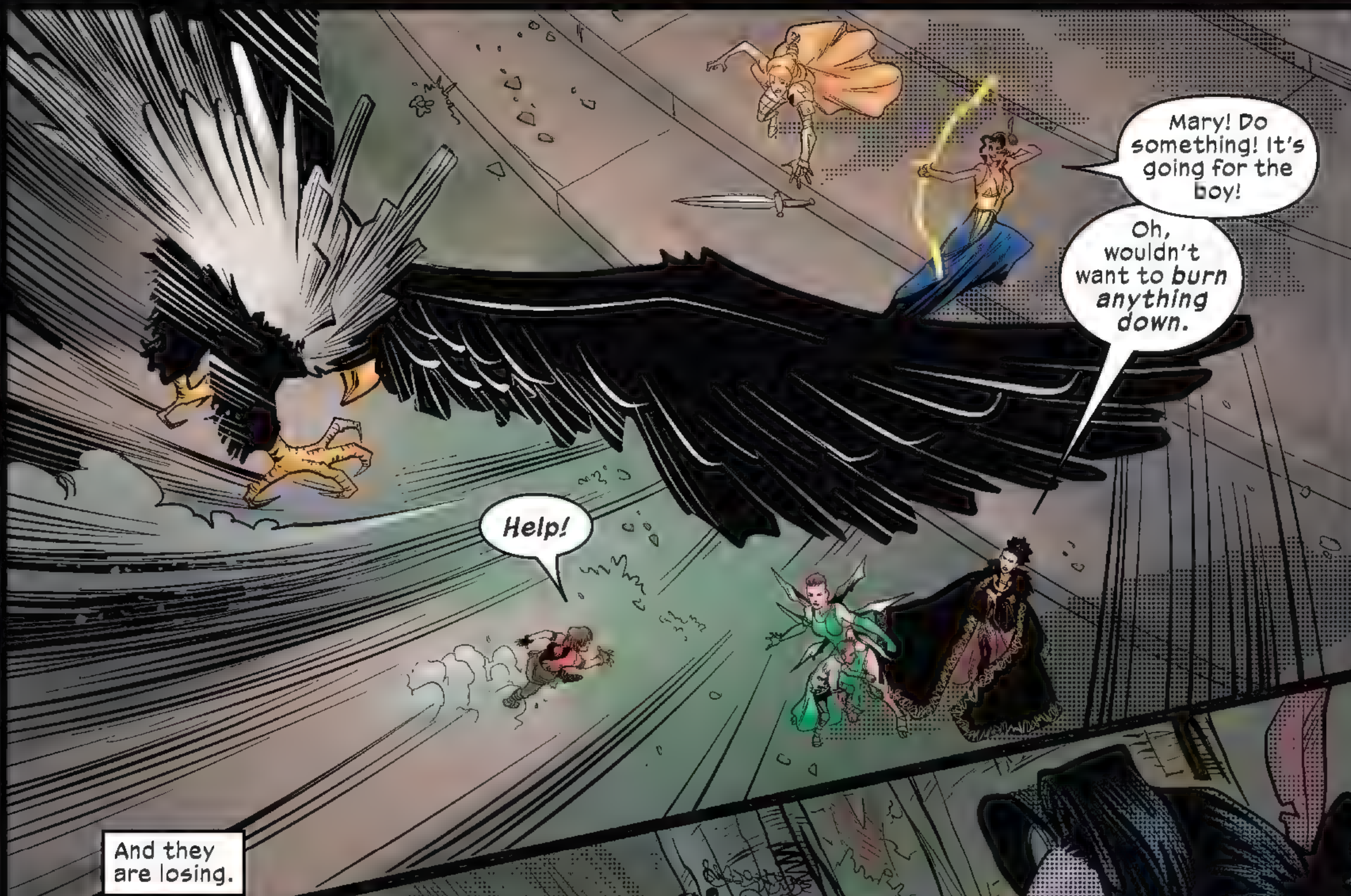
Goodness' sake, Mary!

Could you help out? Preferably without burning the camp down?

It feels like a play. A move in a game they do not understand.



Bloody hell!



Mary! Do something! It's going for the boy!

Oh, wouldn't want to burn anything down.

Help!

And they are losing.



You talk to birds... Can't you just tell it to stop?

MOTHER! HELP ME!

Not how it works, Mary!



Oh... dammit.

AAARGHHH!

I don't understand... they didn't attack anyone. Why take the boy?

WEEEEE!

A few minutes later.

The boy's quiet cries quiver through the air.

What the hell?!

HHhhhelp...
mm-e-e!

Meek and horrifying, it is the sound of terror.

The Witch watches with bated breath, willing Curse to take the bait.



P-p-please!

Put him down, you feathery %*#@&!



Willing her to use her power.

Noooooo!

I'm warning you, you overgrown pigeons!

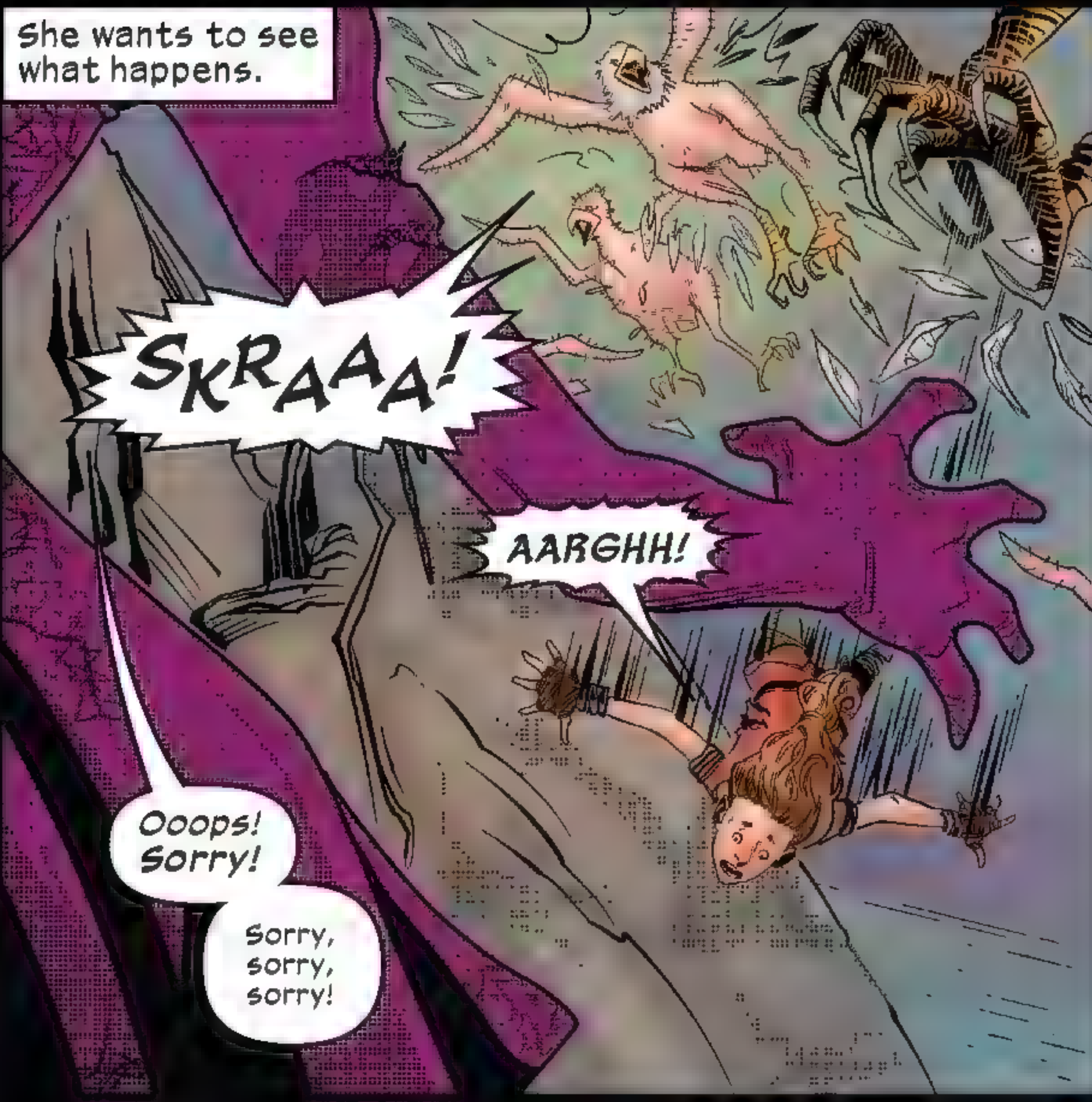
You wannabe swans!

Willing her to save him.



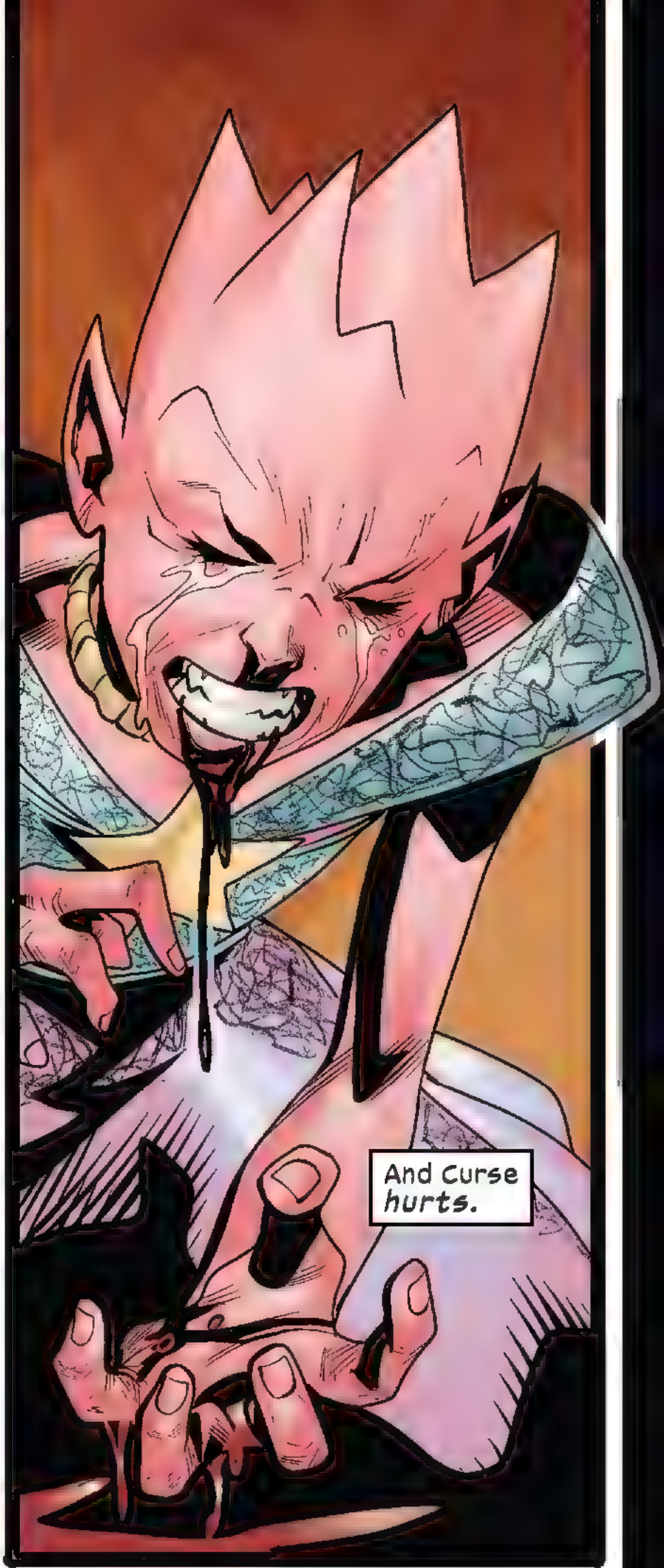
ARGH!

PLUCK YOU!





Reality yields.



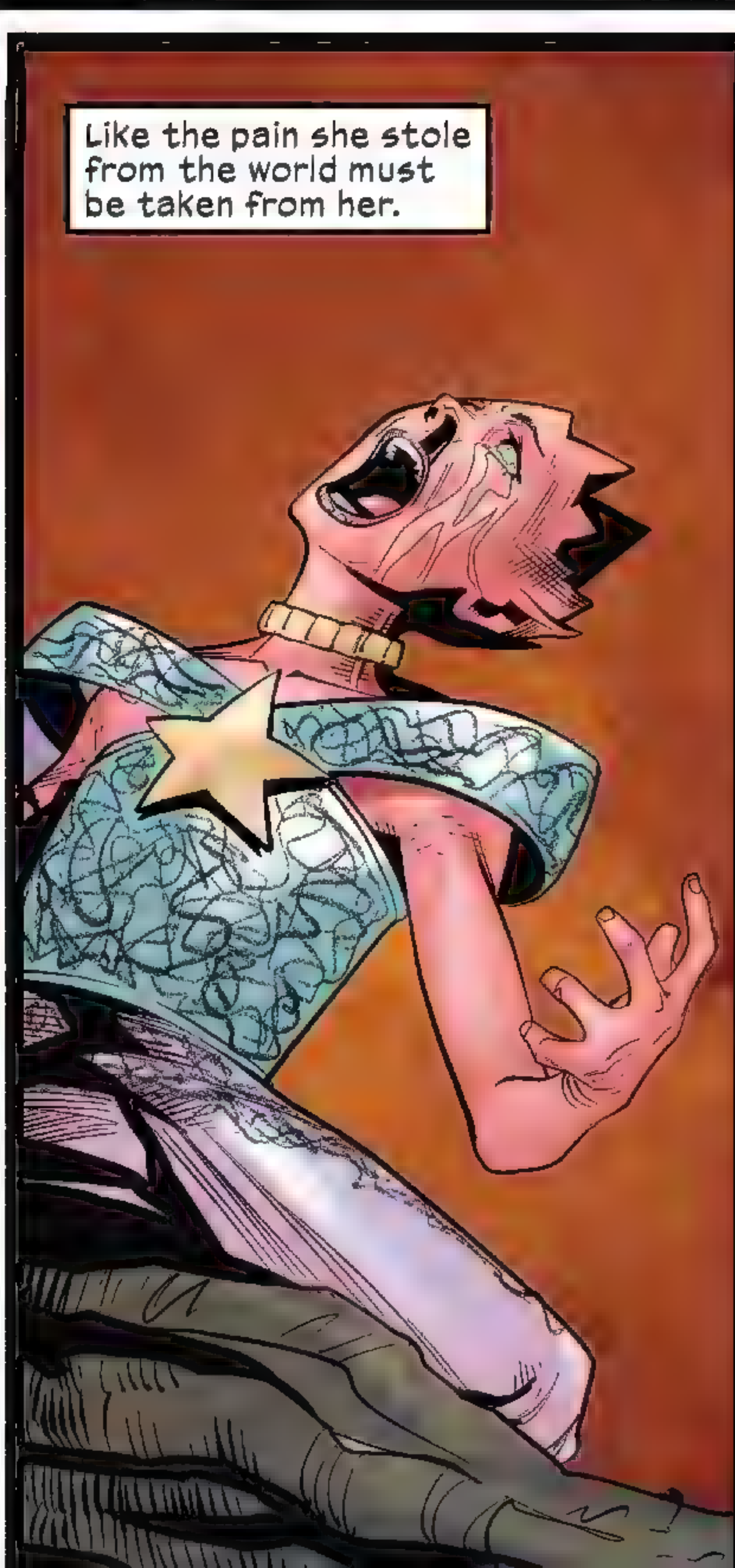
And Curse hurts.



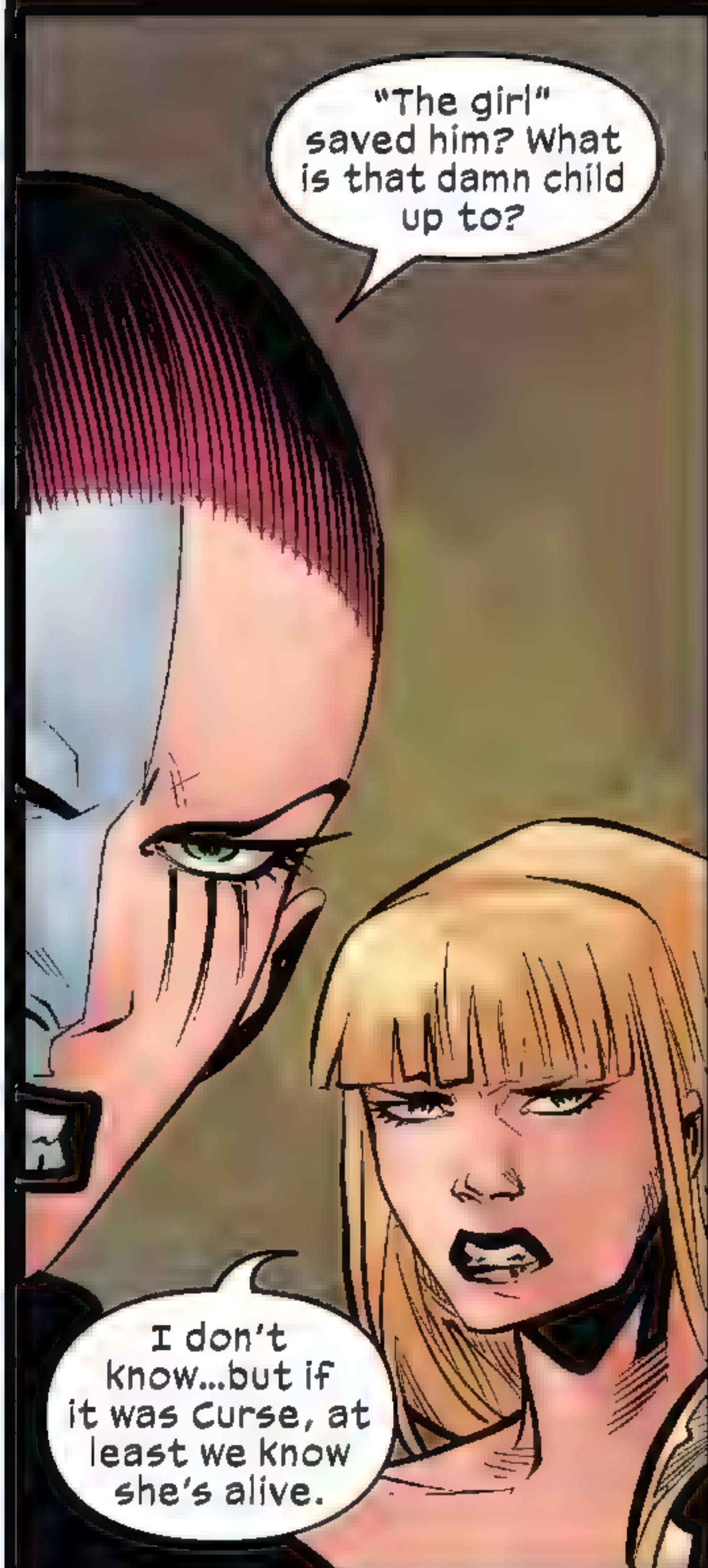
What the hell?!

Mother!

She saved me!
The girl...



Like the pain she stole from the world must be taken from her.



"The girl" saved him? What is that damn child up to?

I don't know...but if it was Curse, at least we know she's alive.

Saturnyne finds--

Oh, sweet girl...

--to her surprise--

--that it is not an act.

Let me ease your pain.

Even if it is not exactly love--

--she cares deeply for this girl--

--this child--

Let me take you home.

--this weapon.

Diary Entry

By Leheran Altion, Head Librarian in the Third Age,
the Library of Prophecies

////////////////////////////////////
A young man arrived at the Library today. Only fourteen winters old, he had a particular gift for sight, yet he did not see it as that. A gift. He could not understand what value the images flickering through his mind could be to anyone.

I told him, as I always do, that we are not to know. It will make sense when it makes sense. (If I am honest, more often than not, too late.)

He asked me why we do what we do, and I told him, as I always do, that this is all we have. We can record. We can seek understanding. We can listen to the warnings of destiny and attempt to heed them. That is all we have and all that I do.

Resigned, he shared his sight. [File #2971-2-B] He told the same story I had heard many times before. He sees the four strangers, the same four whom all who visit here see: one of fire, one of fear, one of sand and one of bone. He sees the battle. He sees the white witch on a white horse, leading an endless army. He sees the vanir fight back. And he sees the unknowable chaos, followed by inevitable nothing.

So far, his account was much like the others. But then he said something strange.

He said that the chaos laughs. The chaos plays. The chaos is righteous and open and bright.

I was stunned. This does, indeed, suggest that the chaos is a creature, maybe even a sentient one. It suggests that the chaos could be reasoned with.

For the first time since I took this wretched position, I feel hope.

The young man looked relieved to have unburdened himself. Before he left, he asked me, like so many before him, what the point of life is when you know what will happen in the end.

I answered, as I always do--

--that endings are rarely the point of anything.

All life ends the same, after all.

They end in death.
////////////////////////////////////



Lost Lamb



"We were at this Hellfire Gala thing. Well, *I* wasn't supposed to be there...it's like this party for grownups to, like, dress up and smooch.

"We just snuck in to see what the fuss was about, you know...?"

Mutants of Earth, this is **Charles Xavier**. You must *not resist*. You must *comply*. Walk through the closest gate.

"But then...*something* happened. And Charles Xavier was, like, in our heads, losing it...

"I sometimes get...*difficult* when people tell me what to do.

How much do we *love* mankind?

Don't be like that, Curse. Come on!

Like *what*? I don't want to!

"But it's not like the entire thing was, like, *my fault*...

"Everyone just *freaked out* and--

Curse!
COME ON!

"I didn't want to go through that gate thing.

"And then Magik dragged me to the gate--

Sometimes you have to do things you don't want to, Curse.

Stop it!

"--and I just got so angry..."

...and it's not like I wanted to *hurt* her...or any of them...

I just...



You just what, my dear?

I...



Be not afraid. All will be made clear, but know that in doing this, you are saving many humans lives...and perhaps that of your own.

We have to go, Curse!

Then let's go somewhere, but...*not with Charles!*



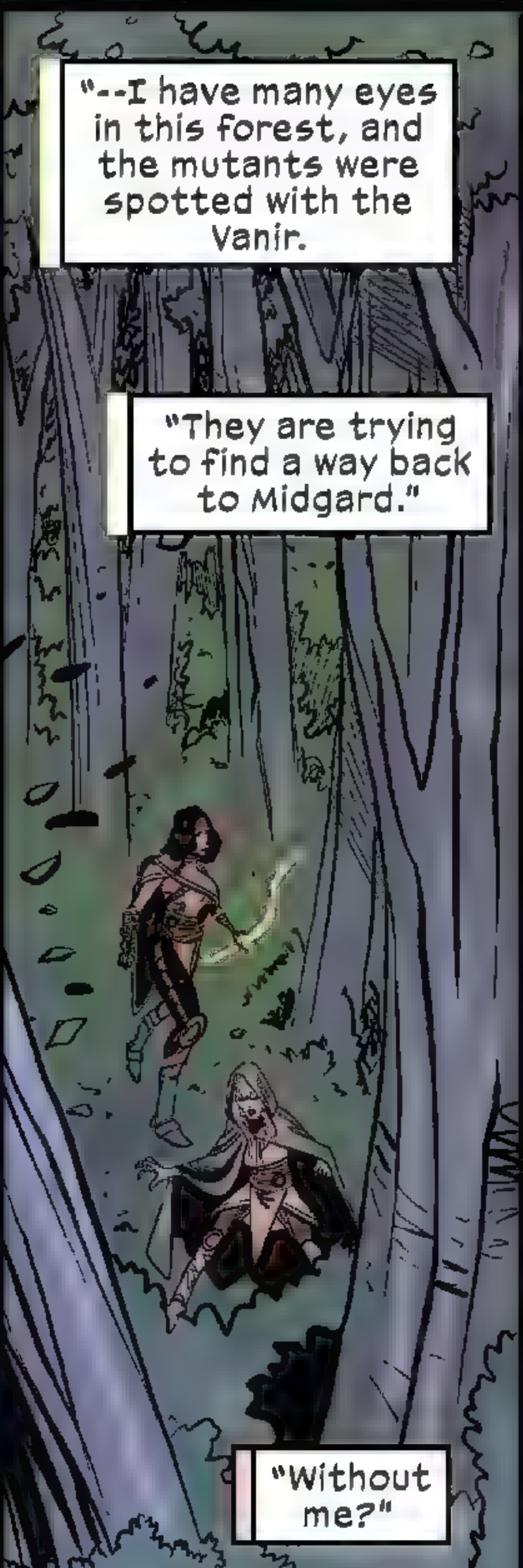
And then we woke up here, and all the mutants who came with us were all... *hurting*.

I...I shouldn't have run away from them, but I didn't want them to be angry...

They're probably looking for me.

The other mutants?

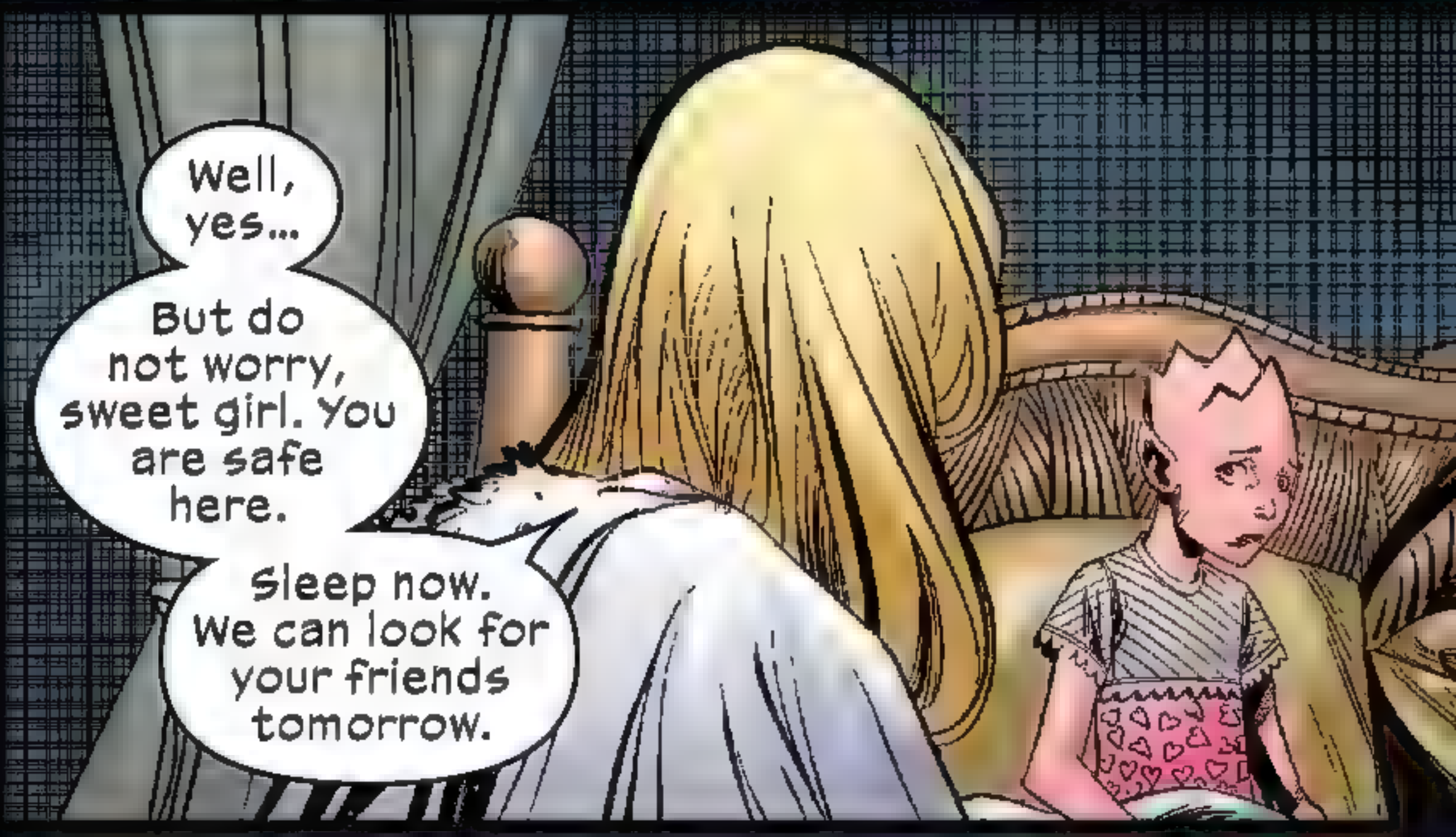
Well, I hate to tell you this, but--



"--I have many eyes in this forest, and the mutants were spotted with the Vanir.

"They are trying to find a way back to Midgard."

"Without me?"



Well, yes...

But do not worry, sweet girl. You are safe here.

Sleep now. We can look for your friends tomorrow.



They're *not* my friends.

X weeks later.

Hope is a fickle thing.

The rival of reason--

--it erodes over time.

What do you think, Magik?

Well... I feel sick. Dizzy.

...Scared.

I do not want to be here.

It's not just me, then.

It is a charm of some kind, keeping us away from this place. Subtle but effective.

It is the only magic I've felt in this mystically barren place.

So, if there is magic here, can you...?

Ever hungry--

No. I still can't...focus my magic. Something is siphoning power from the entire realm.

I have even tried drawing from...darker sources, but the flow is blocked.

--it needs nourishment to survive.

How far does the charm reach?

A sign--

The feeling of discomfort intensifies the closer you come to the mountain. And then you hit an invisible wall... It covers the entire citadel. I have not found a way through it.

--an idea--

A wall?

A wall. I think I read something about that...

I'll check the library and see if I can find anything useful.

--a spark of something.

I'll walk you...

I'll be fine! Keep up the search for Curse.

Dani and Marrow should be back today. I'd love to have something for them.

So you can keep going.

The House
of Mult.

And keep
fighting.

Again.

...Again.

KLANG

KLANG

Mind
your
elbow!

I bloody
well am!

Again.

Typhoid Mary
does not feel
like she is doing
anything wrong.

AAAARRGH!

AGAIN?!

After all, *Fisk*
would hardly mind
his wife beating
someone up.

MARY!



Even if that
someone
is sweet...

Mary,
please...I beg
you...

Is that
how you beg,
Vonos?

I could
make you
beg.

...and gentle.



I do not
doubt it. I do not
doubt your ability to
make me do whatever
you want.

But you
asked me to help
you improve your
longsword.

An act of
desperation. There
is nothing else to do
in this godforsaken
forest!

I must have
been out of my mind.



And strong.

Is that so?
Do you want me
to go?



And in awe
of her.



Very well,
then.

Again.

It has become increasingly clear to Magik--

We should do daggers next. You would not stand a chance.

--that searching for truth in a library of prophecy--

--is much like staring into a bowl of alphabet soup--

Frider! You remember the prophecy about the walls?

Joana's writings? Hard to forget. I will find them for you.

But first, we had a delivery from Telemark while you were away.

The book you requested was found in a collection of holy texts in their library.

Are you hoping for divine intervention?

--looking for advice.

No. It is not for me, but thank you. I know it will be treasured.

And I finally found the Goddarf Prophecies.

The text is rather...*unintelligible*. Goddarf was famously more of a poet than a prophet.

He was also a raging drunk.

But the text focuses on the *fifth mutant*, and I understand she is of some interest to you. Goddarf refers to it as Chaos, not Curse.

But there is a drawing, if memory serves...

A-ha!

It's her.

"Chaos, wild tempest with unyielding tide, its swirling winds a tumultuous decree, in the realm where chaos and peace abide."

Where are you, Curse?

Diary Entry

By Frider Frostborn,
Current Head Librarian at the Library of Prophecy
Six weeks ago

Renowned prophetess Joana Thornwood is visiting the library. She has been here for a fortnight, and we are running out of time. And wine.

We had hoped she would be able to shed light on the question of the fifth stranger, but she seems preoccupied with walls. She has written endless passages about barriers, partitions and the dividers between us -- literally, magically -- and metaphorically.

It falls to me to interpret her prophecies, and I am beginning to wonder if the barrier she is referring to is related to a strange phenomenon reported throughout Vanaheim: we seem to be losing our magic. Could these walls she speaks of somehow disrupt the flow of powers in the realm?

Joana is considered the most accurate soothsayer in Vanaheim, but, as with many of those who offer only truth in their predictions, it is usually only possible to piece together their meaning until after the event has already happened, and by then, it is too late. Finding something of use with the battle mere weeks away feels like a futile exercise.

I am becoming increasingly aware, surrounded by paper and prophecy as I am, that when the war is inevitably upon us, my life's work is over in one way or another. It is difficult to be certain that it has all been worth it in the end.

We have repeatedly offered Joana refuge in the library for the battle, but her answer is always the same:

"I intend to die laughing, upside down, watching the fools dance to the tune of fate's fiddle."

(I do not know what it means.)

Emberstone Citadel.

"--Yesterday, she used her powers on one of the prisoners.

"She made him vomit Kerulean toads."

Toads? Well, that's not too bad, Tsanna.

And you have to admit, the girl has a sense of humor.

Kerulean toads went extinct a century ago. She brought them back on a whim.

I'm not even sure she knew what they were or that she did it. One jinx, and there they were, back from oblivion.

Oh, I see. Amazing.

She has been here for weeks already. She obviously likes you...

Why do you not ask her to help?

"No. I have been observing her powers..."

HEY!

Oh...it's you.

Well, go on, then-- take as many as you'd like, dear.

DNK OUU!

"Something like this would come at a *great cost*...it might even claim her life."



It must be *her* idea. She must want to help us. She must want to do it more than anything, or I fear her power will fail.

But I do think it is time to plant the idea in her mind.

My queen!



Are we ready to try again?

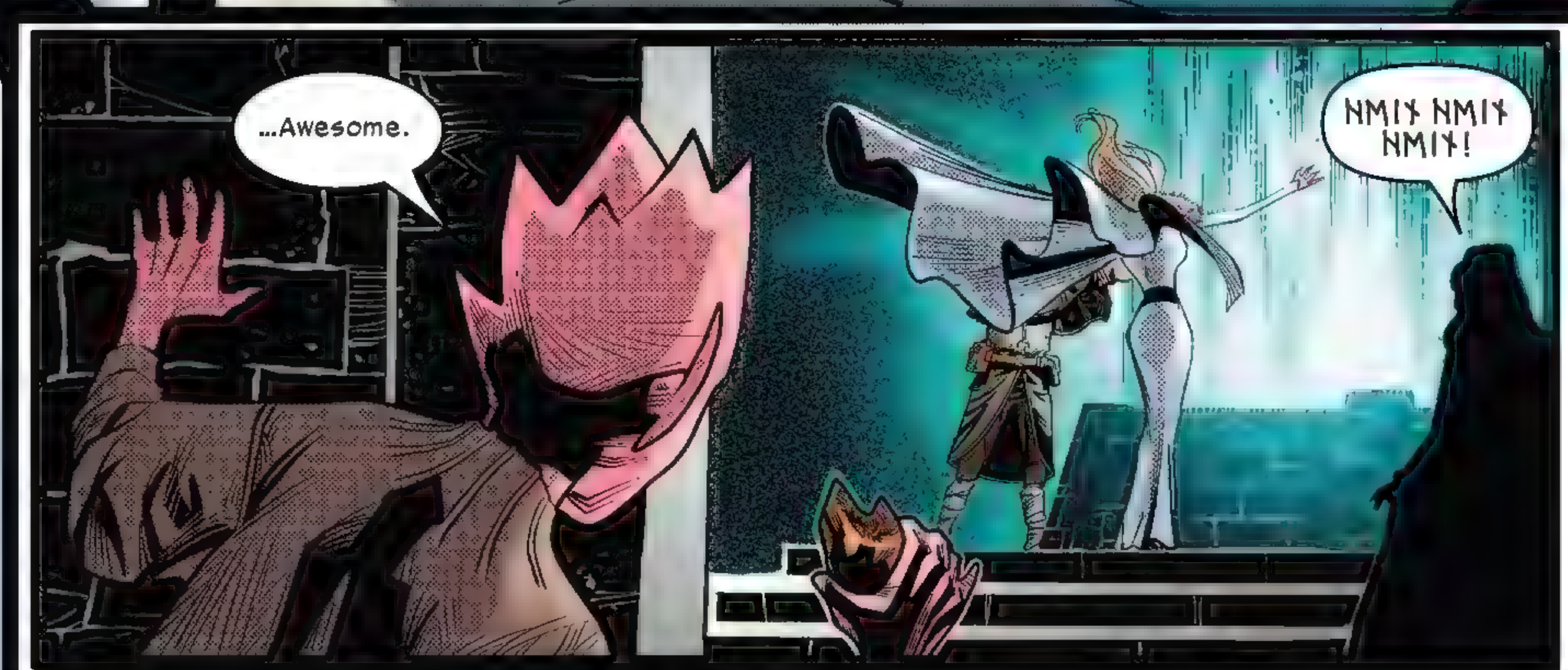
Twenty-third time's a charm.



Yes!

We have to keep trying, Tsanna.

NMIY NMIY NMIY!



...Awesome.

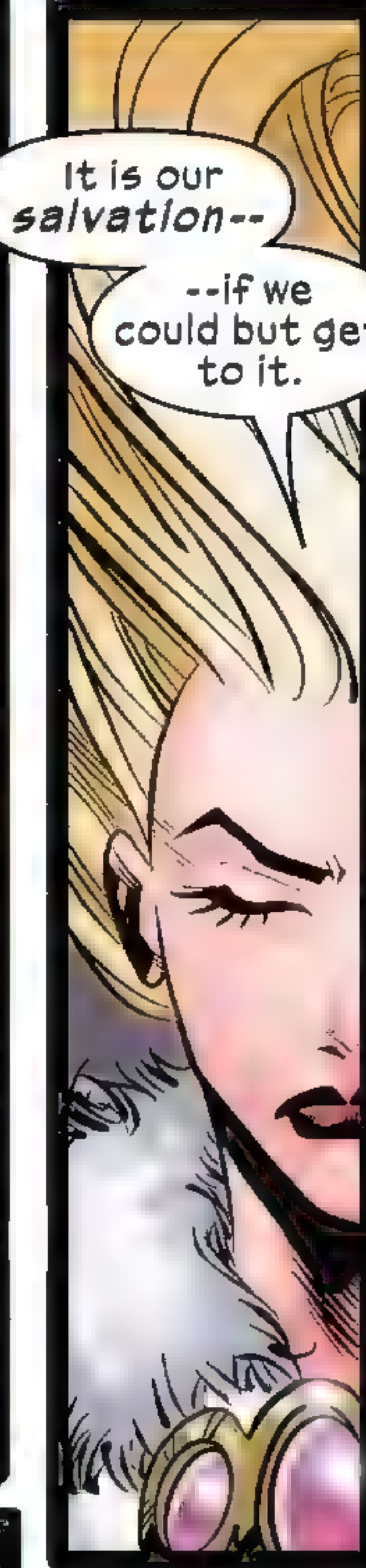
NMIY NMIY NMIY!



Good morning, Curse.

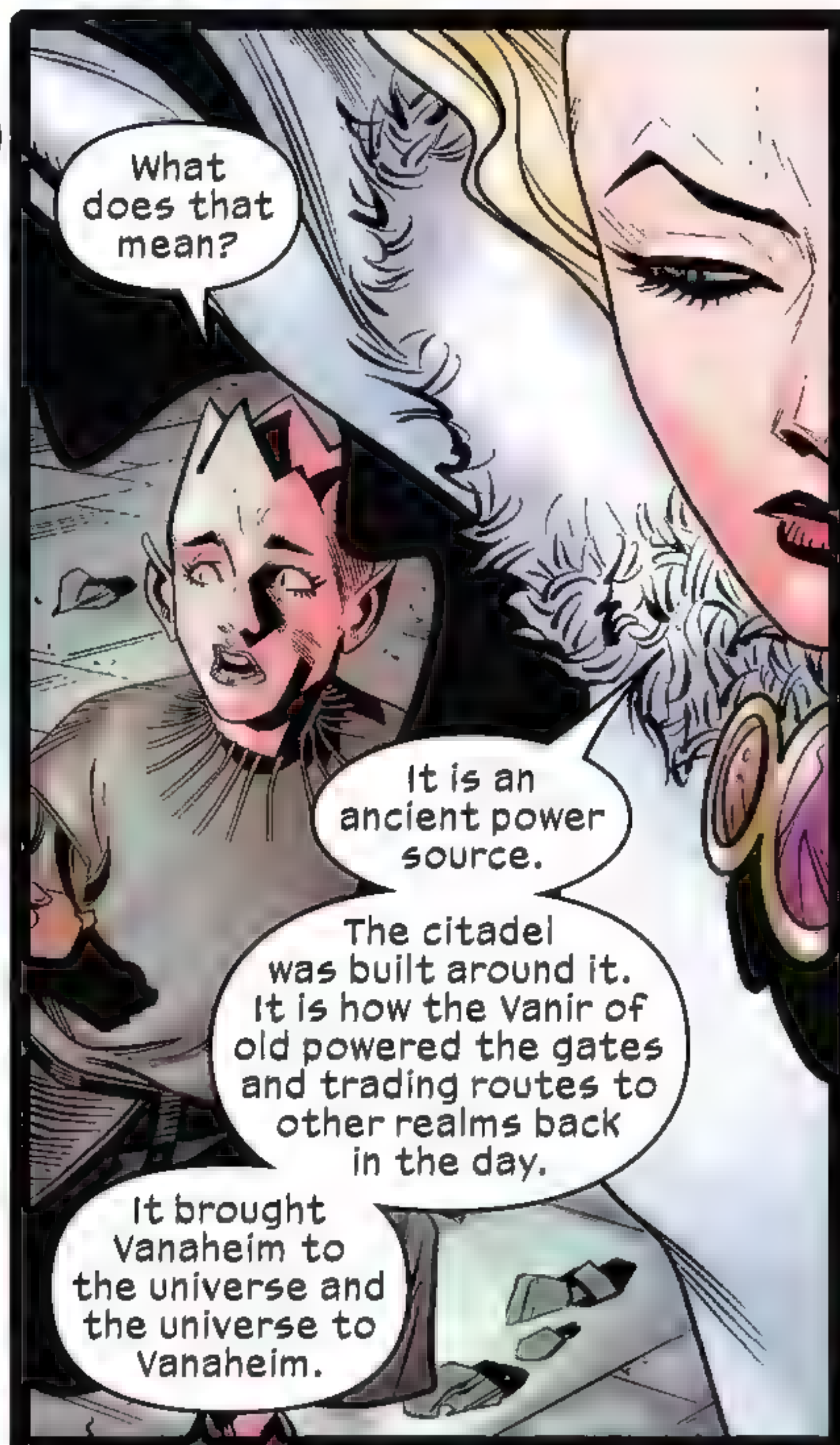
Good... What... what is that thing?

Good morning, Curse.



It is our salvation--

--if we could but get to it.



What does that mean?

It is an ancient power source.

The citadel was built around it. It is how the Vanir of old powered the gates and trading routes to other realms back in the day.

It brought Vanaheim to the universe and the universe to Vanaheim.



But when the Vanir left their cities, they hid it.

Hid it? It's right there!

It was too powerful to be destroyed, so they used its power to hide it in another dimension. We are looking at it through a one-way portal to, well, *somewhere*...



So weird!

Yes...weird. And frustrating.

Limitless power-- right there, yet not there at all. We need to bring it back, but we are running out of time.

Without it, we do not stand a chance in the coming war.

It is not quite a lie--

--but not the entire truth either.

That's the place...

I suppose we could try just walking through the front gates...?

You'd be dead in a second.

Bounty hunters.

Is that so? I don't see why. We have no enemies here.

You do not understand Vanaheim, do you?

You know, when Vanir children turn one, we celebrate a ceremony called Verus.

A *sibyl* will look into the child's life and provide three insights into their future.

It is considered the most formative part of life in this realm.

But the last few years, the sibyls have seen nothing but a haze of clouds.

A generation of Vanir children growing up in the dark.

Because of you.

It has been a frustrating few weeks.

And in this moment--

I repeat: We do not want any trouble.

Rightfully or not, many here blame you for what's to come.

--Dani Moonstar does not speak for Marrow.

After weeks of walking through this war-torn land--

So, yes, in a way, this is *personal*.

But there is also a massive price on your heads.

Dead or alive. Your choice, *girlies*.

--she is aching for a fight.

And she decides--

Tonight, when every breath you take is torment--

--when you regret every pathetic step that brought you to this miserable fight--

Sarah... don't...

--they will do.

Get them!

--remember-- this was on you.

Dammit.



Mirage
and Marrow
choose
mercy.

(Of sorts.)

Dani Moonstar's
arrow does not
hurt the body--

--but it traps
the mind in its
own nightmares.

What do you say?
Still want to kill
the girlies?

Sarah!



Dani!
Sarah! What
happened?

Bounty
hunters.
Apparently,
there's a price
on our
heads.

We were
looking for
a way in...
but--



You want to
infiltrate the
citadel?

Want is a
strong word. But
we have exhausted
every other
possibility.

There is
supposed to be
a connection to
the World Tree in the
citadel. Maybe even a
port with functioning
ships...

It's our
last resort,
but we're not
getting through that
entrance without
an army.

I have
been probing the
perimeter of the wall
surrounding the citadel.
There is a hidden gate on
the east side. The raiders
use it to enter Vanir
territory.

It is protected
by a magical wall, but
there are weaknesses.
I think we can get
through.



Are you still
searching the forest
for Curse?

Every day. I can cover more ground than Illyana,
and she would be out here if I were not.

Personally, I am
convinced Curse is
in the citadel. It is the
only place we have
not searched.

Magik
still blames
herself?

Yes.

She has
been taking care
of the wounded
and poring over
books in the
library.

To tell you
the truth, I am
worried about her. This
realm is doing something
to her magic, and her
powers are still lost.
She seems lost
without them.

What
of Typhoid
Mary?

Later. The House of Mulk.

"Well, Mary
is Mary still."

You've
been gone for
weeks--

--you
return with
NOTHING--

That's
not fair,
Mary.

SLAM

We have not rested. We have tried every
portal, every ship, every key and spell.
We are trapped here.

Whatever is
cutting Vanaheim
off from the rest of
the realms is doing
a thorough
job.

What about
Asgard? Aren't
you, like, old
friends?

Our
messages go
unanswered.

Either
Asgard is involved
somehow, or we're
not getting
through.

I want.

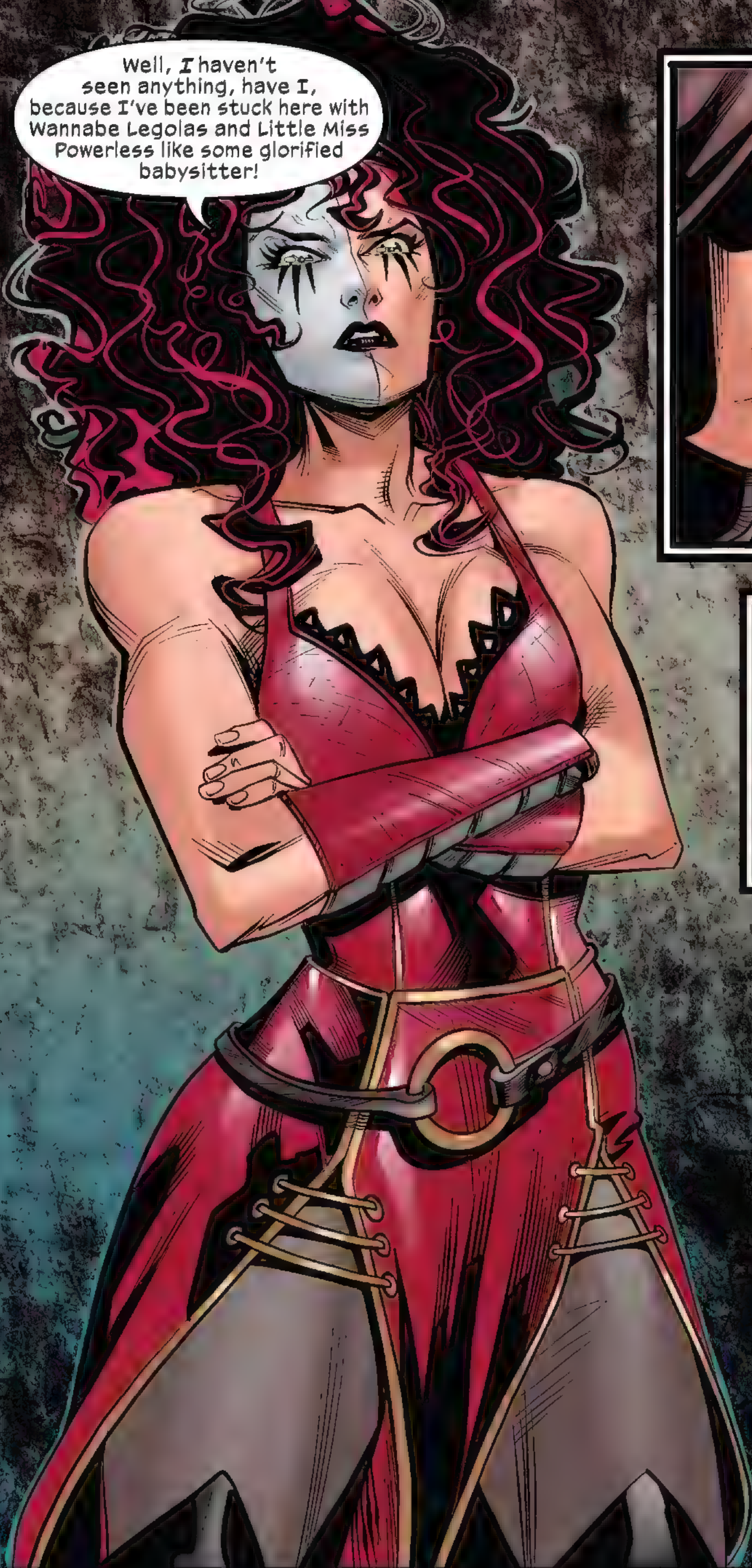
To go.

Home.

Our last
resort is trying
to get into the
citadel itself.

I will pledge my unyielding allegiance
to the White Witch if she can get
us out of this godforsaken
mud pit.

You would
not say that if
you'd seen what
we have seen,
Mary.



Well, I haven't seen anything, have I, because I've been stuck here with Wannabe Legolas and Little Miss Powerless like some glorified babysitter!

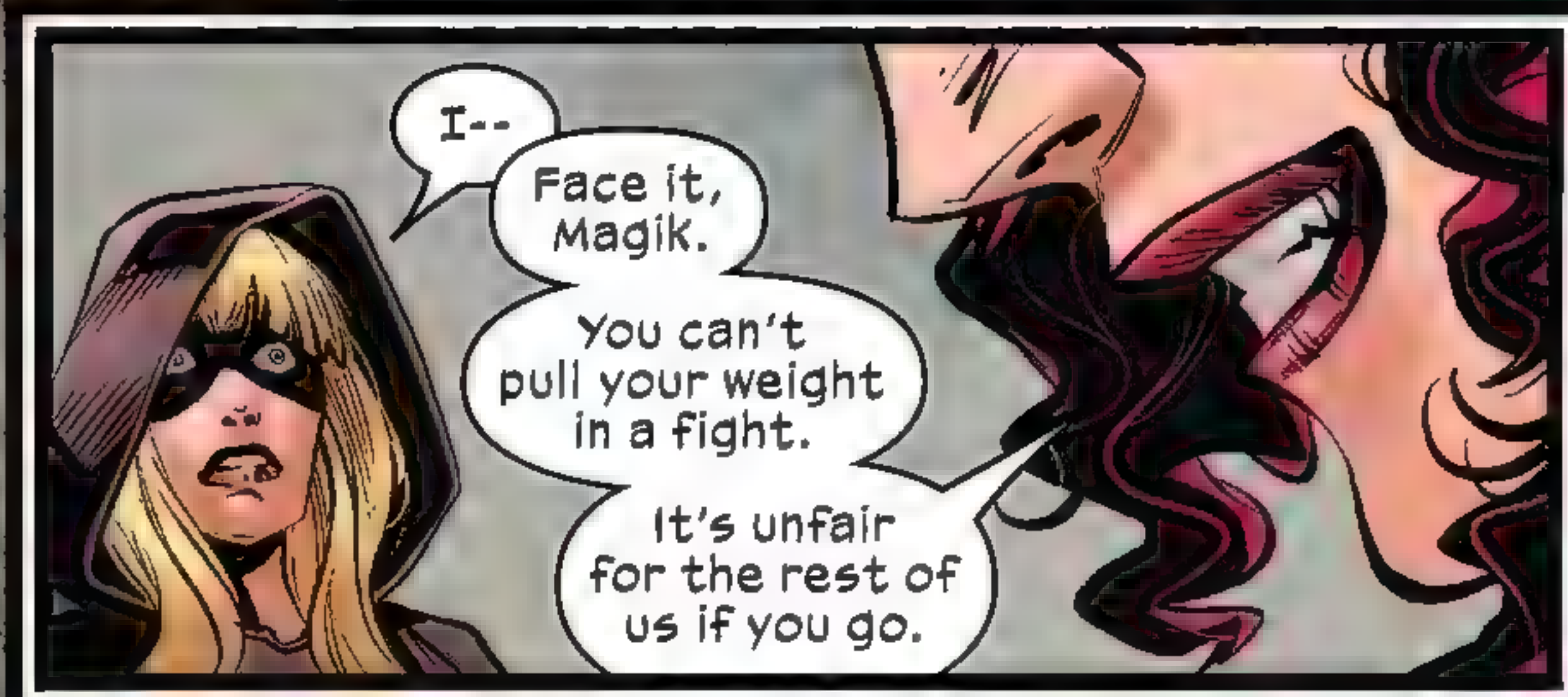


All of our people are fully recovered now. The prophesied battle is only a day away...if we could get them out of here before the war--

It's worth a try.

I say we go--

Well, you're not going at any rate.



I--

Face it, Magik.

You can't pull your weight in a fight.

It's unfair for the rest of us if you go.



Nothing hurts like the truth.

For ##&%# sake, Mary.

You have the sensibility of a dump truck.



No...it's okay. She is right. You go.

Find Curse. Find a way to get the others to safety.



Thor Odinson, All-Father and King of Asgard,

We are unsure if you have received our previous communications, but we take the liberty of asking for your assistance once more.

Our realm is in peril. The one who calls herself the White Witch has taken up residence in Emberstone Citadel. She is rebuilding the structure we abandoned eons ago and, along with it, we fear, the weapons and war machines that the Vanir once forged. Despite our renewed attempts at peaceful negotiations, diplomacy has proven unsuccessful.

If the potential destruction of Vanaheim, your long-standing ally, fails to spur your forces into action, perhaps the notion of an unknown adversary armed with ancient Vanir weaponry will. Should you need a reminder of the devastation they are capable of, we urge you to consult your own historical records. Know that there is no reason to believe this sorceress will confine her campaign of violence to our realm.

We are prepared and willing to fight. We are fully ready for the conflicts that lie ahead. Yet the future is most uncertain, and when we consult it, we see nothing but darkness.

We implore you to assist us, and if that is not feasible, we request a response. Your silence in this matter is difficult to interpret as anything other than an act of aggression.

↑RYBIN

Commander Trabin of the House of Milt,
Vanaheim



There are ways to change fate. But that is not what you want, is it, Saturnyne?

You want to control it. And that, sweet, cruel queen, is beyond you.

What a bore you are, Joana.

There is a theory that the only way to change one's fate is to give something up.

Not a symbolic thing. Destiny cares little for gestures.

But truly go against your nature. Give your very self up and see what grace you will find.

But you will not give up anything, will you?

You are not going to let this old hag get to you, my queen?

If I cannot change the prophecy, why act at all? Why not sit back and wait?

The mutants are here. I can feel them walking through the charmed forest.

They have come for their lost lamb.

Well?

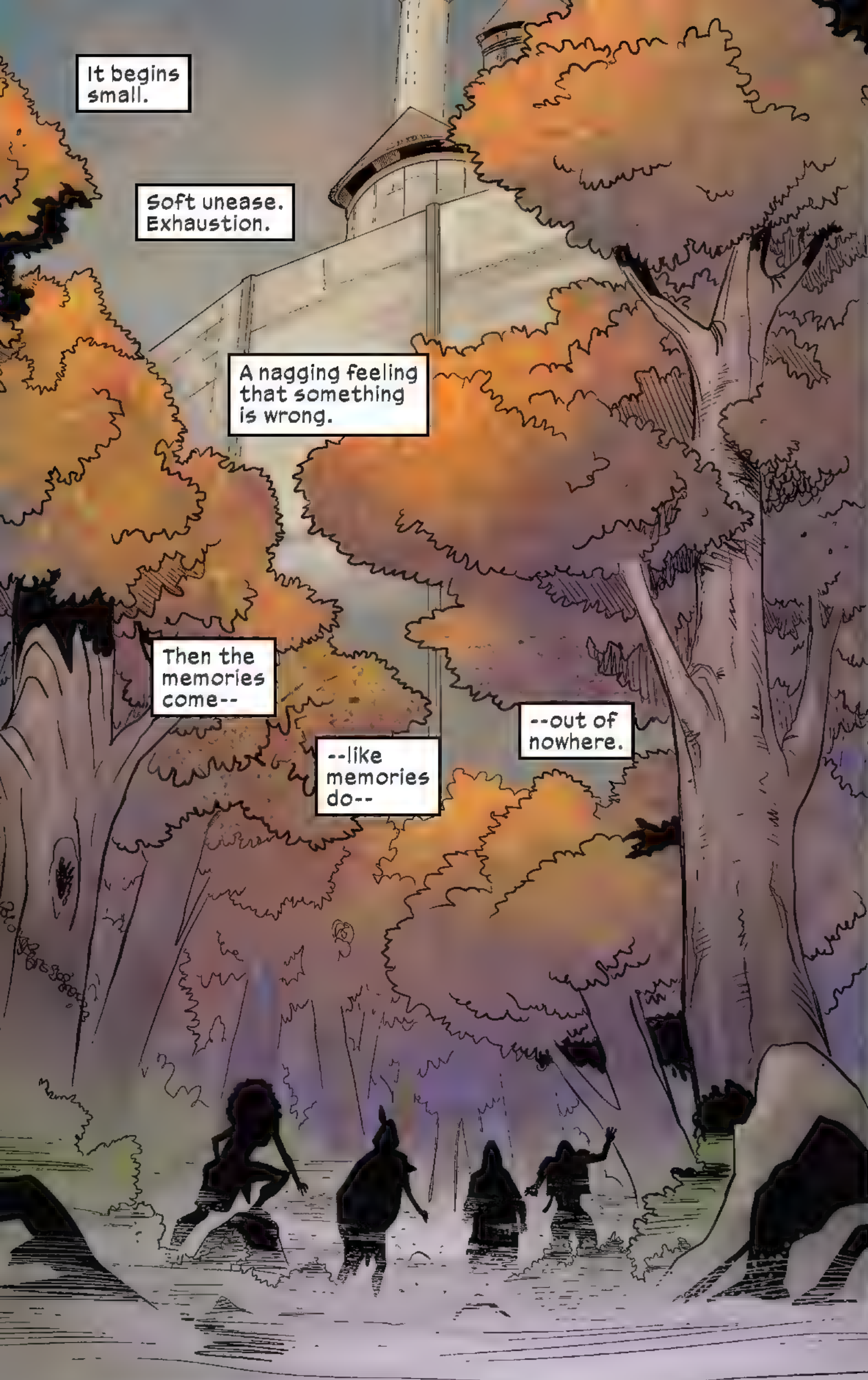
What will you do, Saturnyne? Are you going to fight?

So you try to control the game of fate--

--without knowing the rules.

And without understanding that we all play a part in what's to come.

You can try to outsmart your destiny if you like. See where it gets you.



It begins small.

Soft unease. Exhaustion.

A nagging feeling that something is wrong.

Then the memories come--

--like memories do--

--out of nowhere.



Lived horrors--

Do you feel that?

--coming alive in their minds.



What the hell is happening?

Marrow sees Alexandria.

She feels the emptiness twist her inside. The guilt is overwhelming.

It is whatever it takes to make us turn around. It will pass... I think.



Sooraya has never told anyone what she sees in her darkest hours.

I hope.

But she does what she always does when the images of her past intrude--

--she prays.

And keeps going.



In the depths of Mary's mind, there is blood. Coats that once were white.

Stay with us, Mary. It's just a trick.



Had Magik been with them, she could have told them who was watching their memories.

She would have understood what they were *giving away* as they walked through the shield of magic.

Through here.

After you.



Bloody hell.

She would have understood who they just let into their minds.



But Ilyana is driven by her own fears--

This has been her all along?

Is that...?

Screaming.



--complex and
all-consuming--

--they are
not of pain
and death.



For a moment,
she wonders if
there is another
way.

Are you
going to
let this fraud
change your
mind?

No. We
find them. We
kill them.

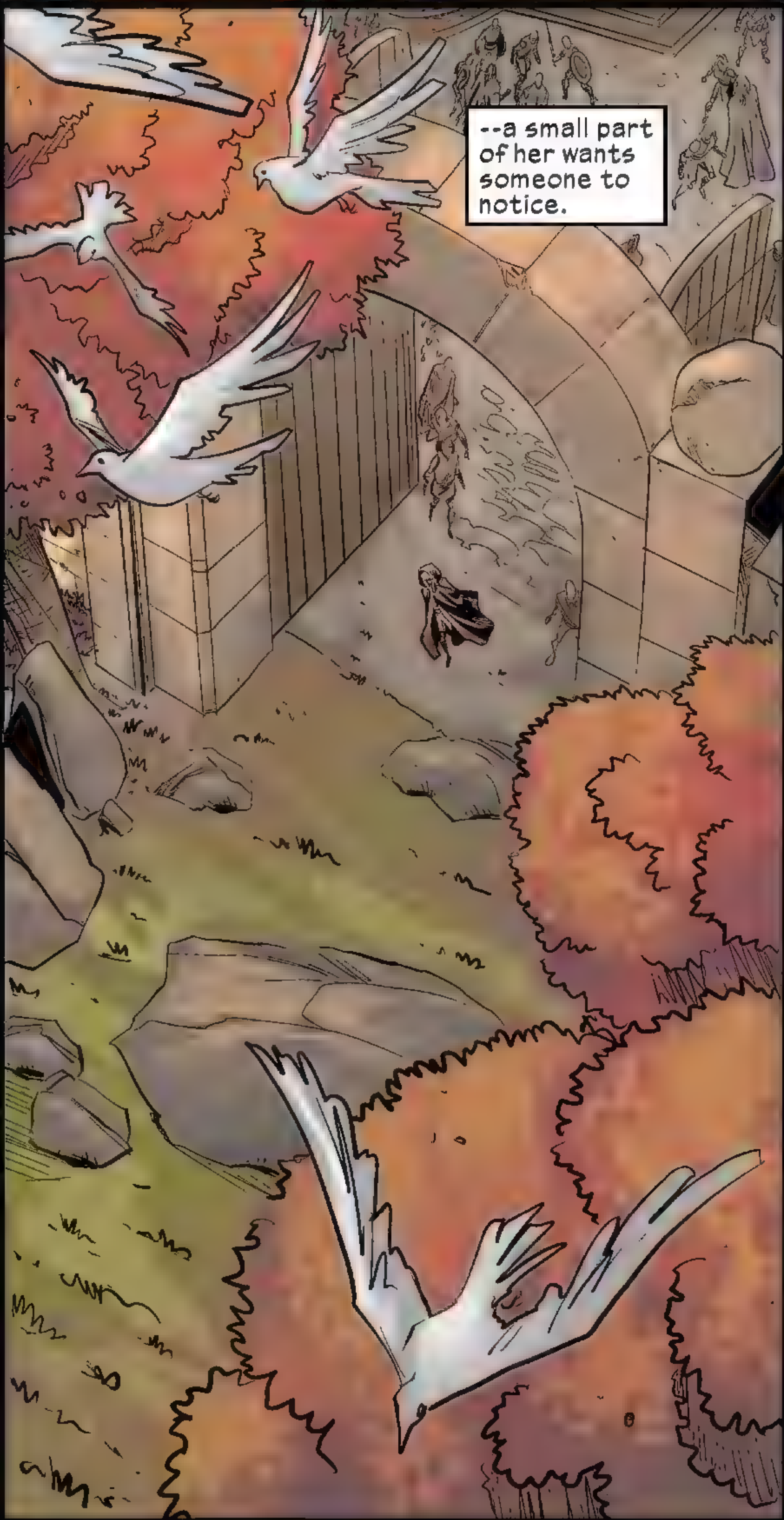


If this is playing
into the hands
of destiny.

But let
us summon
some help.

That's it,
Saturnyne. Death
begets death. War
begets war.

But this is how
it was always
going to be.





First Spilled Blood



Of all the ways one can welcome
intruders to one's land--

--*Saturnyne*
chooses *violence*.

Her army is in wait far
beyond the ten realms.

(But such
details do not
hold her back.)

<FM&<.

As the fabric of the
universe tears--

--as her soldiers
travel through
dimensions and time--

--the world
screams.

The sound is
hollow and deep--

--it is the trill
of despair--

--of trees
weeping--

--of stones
shattering--

--of the winds
gasping for air.



The sound reaches far.

WHAT THE HELL IS THAT?

It feels like the world is breaking!

There! Look at the sky!

Far in the distance, they see the ships coming through the tear in the sky.

But then reality fights back--

Hrrk--

Hrrk--

--and the power it takes to keep the rip open is too much--

--even for Saturnyne.

But she did not pick Vanaheim for its beauty.

Deep in the citadel, there is enough power to rent time and space itself.

Only *one* zzzhip and you could not get that through without losses.

We are waiting, Zzaturnyne.

Thizzz is not good enough.

The power source will be activated in time. You will all get through.

If she could but get to it.

But right now we have more pressing concerns. One of my boundary charms has been activated-- we have four intruders within the citadel.

Kill them.

Very well, Queen.

We need *the source*, Your Grace. You need to talk to Curse.

Don't worry, Tsanna. I have other alternatives if the little brat proves uncooperative.

You do not mean--

I do.

We're so close, Tsanna. If the Vanir wish to test my resolve, I'm happy to show them the extent of it.

The mutants got in through the back gate. Double the defenses around the citadel. This might be some pathetic attempt to distract us.

Yes, my Queen. What will you do?

I'm going to catch a storm.

It was always
a *long shot*.

To find a
way home.

They went there
to find Curse.

What are
they?

Hell if I know, but I
think they're here
for *us*.

If we
attack them, there
will be no hope for
diplomacy.

**FIRE AT
WILL!**

I don't
think they're
interested in
diplomacy,
Dani.

I agree...
but I think we
owe it to the
others to--

KH-BOOM

Maybe even find
a way to peace.

THWACK

HEYYY!

**ARGHH, YOU
BLOODY ALIEN
BASTARDS!**

Never
mind.

(But it was
always a
long shot.)



Mirage uses her powers to search for the *fears* of their enemy.

They do not have a word for it in their language.

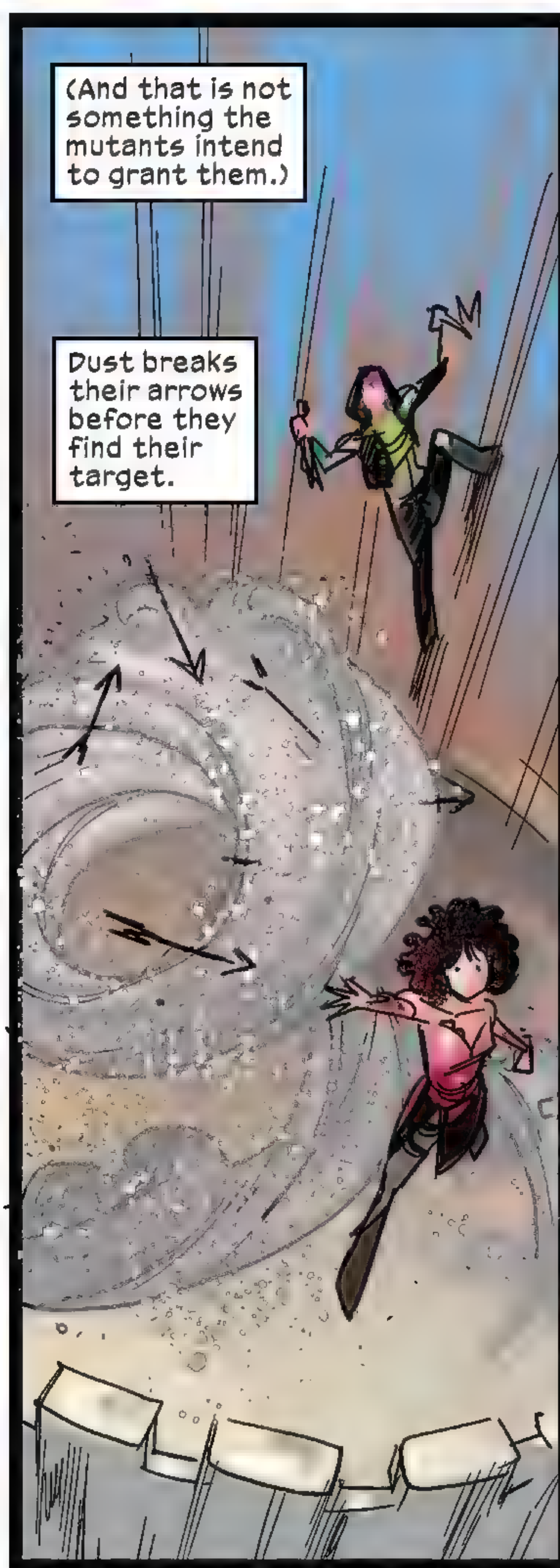
(The fearful among them do not survive their training.)



I got the one on the left.

The only *desires* she can see in them--

--are the deaths of their enemies.



(And that is not something the mutants intend to grant them.)

Dust breaks their arrows before they find their target.



Mary plays with the ones that get through.

Is that really the best you can do?

Marrow lets
her anger out.

The
storm! Protect
yourself.

Sand is
the least of your
problems!

But the sky is dark
with the shadows of
their enemies.

There
are too
many.

I can
do this all day,
Marrow.

Is that...is
that her? The
Witch?

No...
that's...

And then
they see
her.

SATURNYNE?!

The Witch
watches
them run.

Flick!

My wind
for yours,
Dust.

She feels them
as they move
through the
invisible walls
surrounding
her domain.

Who gives
a \$#%& who
she is?!

It matters
because--

--whatever
we thought this
fight was--

Saturnyne's magic tears
through the storm,
splitting it to pieces.

(She knows what
power lies in the
congregation.)

And deep
inside,
Sooraya
hurts.

--we were
wrong.



AGH! YOU BLOODY--

What is that, Commander Trabin?

Arm yourself, Vonos.

When Trabin was but a boy, the sibyl who performed his Verus gave him the moniker *First Blood*.



As a young soldier, he earned his name time and time again.

AAARRRRGHHH!

HALT!

Always at the front line with his men. Always first in battle.



The name followed him through the years. Proudly spoken by those who served under him.

SHUNK

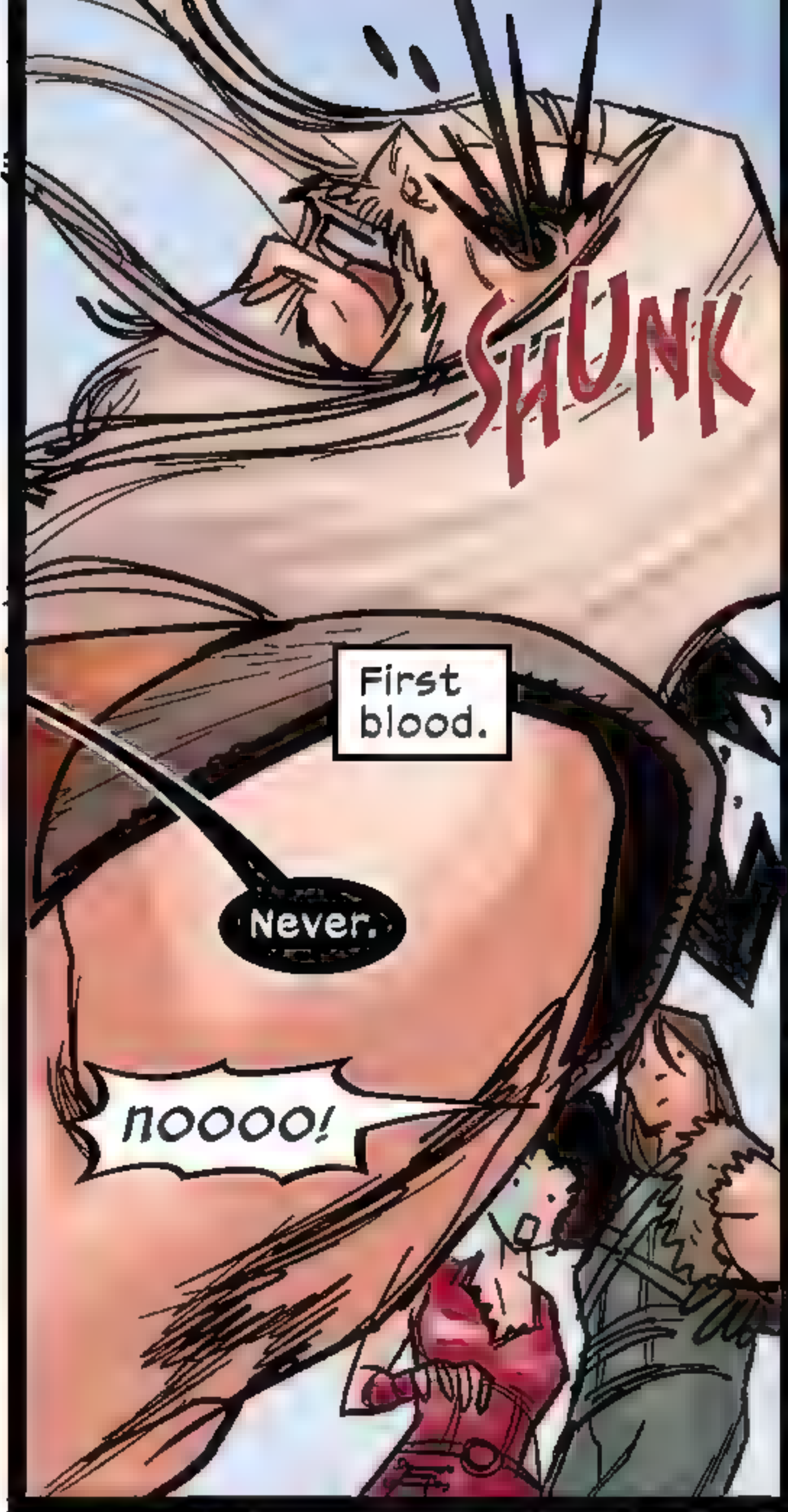
HRFF!



Do you yield?

But he always knew--

--he had always known-- what it meant.



The Fate of Vanaheim

Annotated by Frider Frostborn,
Current head Librarian at the Library of Prophecy.

In the fourth age of Vanaheim, behold the coming storm,
A battle fierce and deadly, where destinies will transform.

Between the light's pure radiance and shadows that encroach,
Four strangers shall arise, destiny they'll approach.

Fire, Sand, Fear and Bone. This confirms previous prophecies. Suggests some magical powers.

One of Fire, fierce and bold, a burning heart untamed,
Guiding flames of passion, in their name, a love reclaimed.

One of Sand, grounded deep, wisdom in their core,
Through the shifting sands of fate, they'll fight and they'll explore.

One of Fear, with courage clear, shall face the darkest night,
Conquering dread with valor, as stars embrace their light. Poetic drive!

One of Bone, with ancient grace, shall bridge the realms of old,
In bones and spirits' whispers, fury shall unfold.

The suggestion is, once again, that the hidden power is a person.

But lo, a fifth stranger, in shadows yet unknown,
Their power hidden, to everyone but the throne.

References to the Witch.

From the great unknown, an endless army is unchained,
They march to rend the realm, for those who wish to reign.

Born of shadows deep, they emerge from the abyss,
Infinite in number, this threat we can't dismiss.

To drain the realm of life, to seize its very core,
In their relentless march, dark days we can't ignore.

Will the person, the fifth stranger, make a choice?

Beneath the depths of mind, a choice concealed from view,
Shall shape the realm's destiny, the old and new to construe.

In the balance of this choice, the world shall be remade,
What lies beyond, we cannot know, the future hides in shade.



It is quiet and hard.

Magik is gone. Mary is drinking. Dani is screaming at the gods and you're praying to yours.

We're not doing great, are we?

With hardship comes ease, Sarah.

I am grateful we are here. I am grateful we are together.

Tears suffocated by the weight of war.



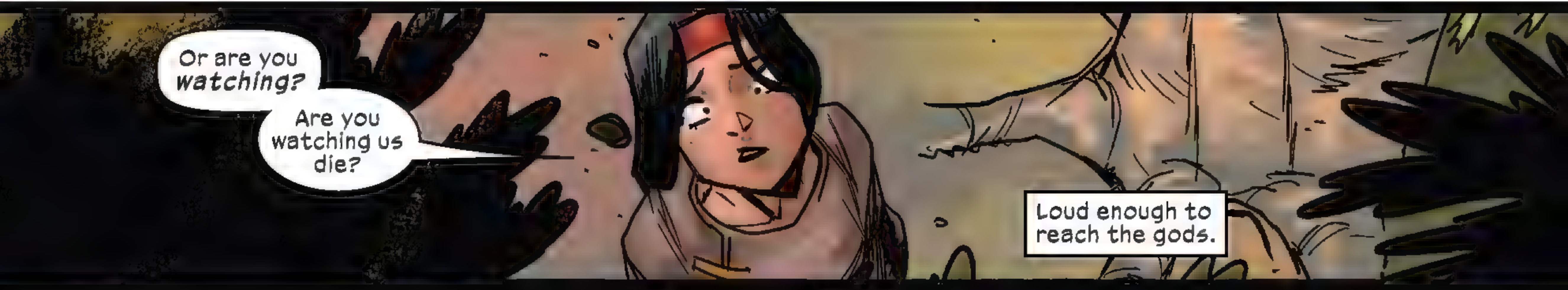
The forest seems to grieve with them.

Sif...

Sif?!

Is there something keeping your eyes from us?

Dani's voice pierces through the silence of the trees.



Or are you watching?

Are you watching us die?

Loud enough to reach the gods.



This is not a war. It is extermination.

It is the death of a branch of your precious World Tree, and you do nothing?

Is this suffering beneath the attention of Asgard?

But if they can hear her--



--they do not answer.

In this pivotal hour, I have entrusted the role of second in command to Captain Vonos. A sense of peace envelops me, a conviction that this choice is the correct one. I have told him all he needs to know. The rest I take to my grave. Preparations for the impending war proceed apace with one glaring exception: the scarcity of rations.

Not since the great flood of the second age have Vanaheim's fertile fields yielded so meagerly. The harvest withers beneath the soil. The once-rich earth has grown desolate, as if plagued by some malignant illness. Autumn is already here. We march under trees of yellows and reds. It would be beautiful if it were not so wrong. The roots rot.

The ground is barren. I bear the weight of 200,000 souls under my command, yet I cannot feed them. The battle looms on the horizon, and I stand already disadvantaged. We cannot use our sorcerers. We cannot trust the soil. It feels like war has already begun.

↑RYBIN

Commander Trabin of the House of Malt,
Vanaheim



Got you, little squall.

@%# your fate, you old crank.

According to the prophecy, the battle is about to begin.

But that will not happen. The mutants are running scared. Our defenses are holding. Our allies are ready.



Even if the Vanir attack us, it will not be as prophesied.

It will not be the grand war... Army vs. army on a field of battle.

They will exhaust their forces on the citadel's walls like the ocean smashing into cliffs.



The battle is about to begin. It will be the grand war.

You will see.



You are infuriating for a dead woman, you know?



There are worse things to be.

My queen.

We need to make a choice... redirect our power reserves to bring over the army or force Curse to act.



Perhaps. Where is Curse?

I want her...

...close.



Emberstone Citadel,
main entrance.
At the same time.

The citadel
is teeming
with life.

In between the recruits
for Saturnyne's army--

--and prisoners
for her dungeon--

--no one pays
Magik any mind.

Much as I
enjoy the occasional
bloodbath--

--it does
come with a lot
of cleanups.

So I
repeat--

--do not
enter through
the gates
armed!

It will
detect weapons,
spells, wands,
enchancements
and magical
artifacts.

If you're
in doubt about
possessing any of
these items, please
contact one of
the guards.

WANTED

I heard
that one breathes
fire.

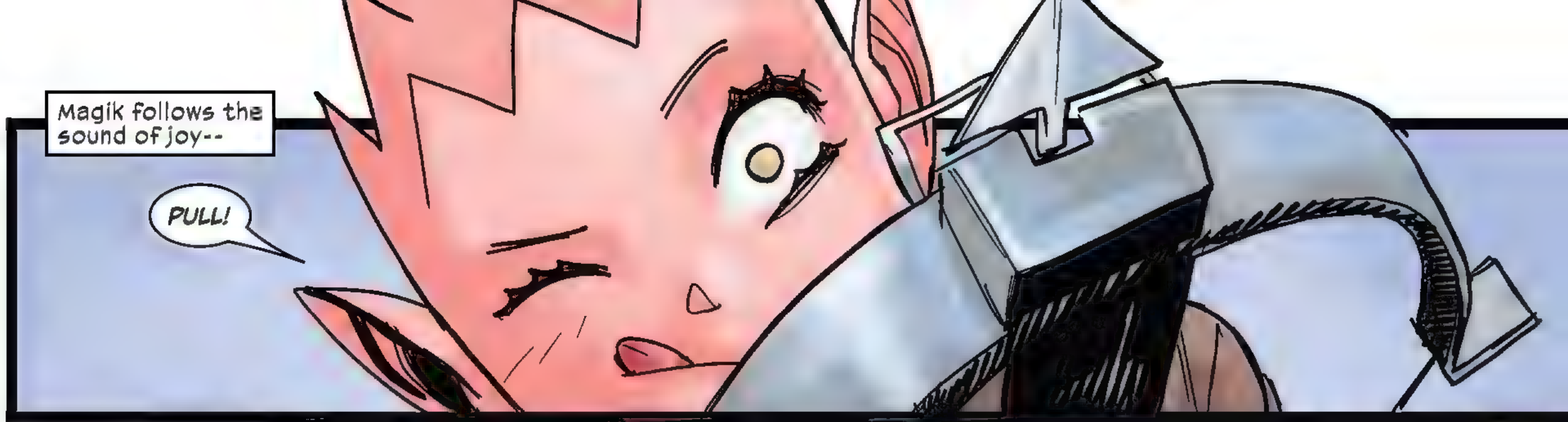
HMPH--

Only
when she's
angry.

You are
welcome to seek
shelter in the citadel,
provided you're
ready to swear your
allegiance to
our queen.







Magik follows the sound of joy--

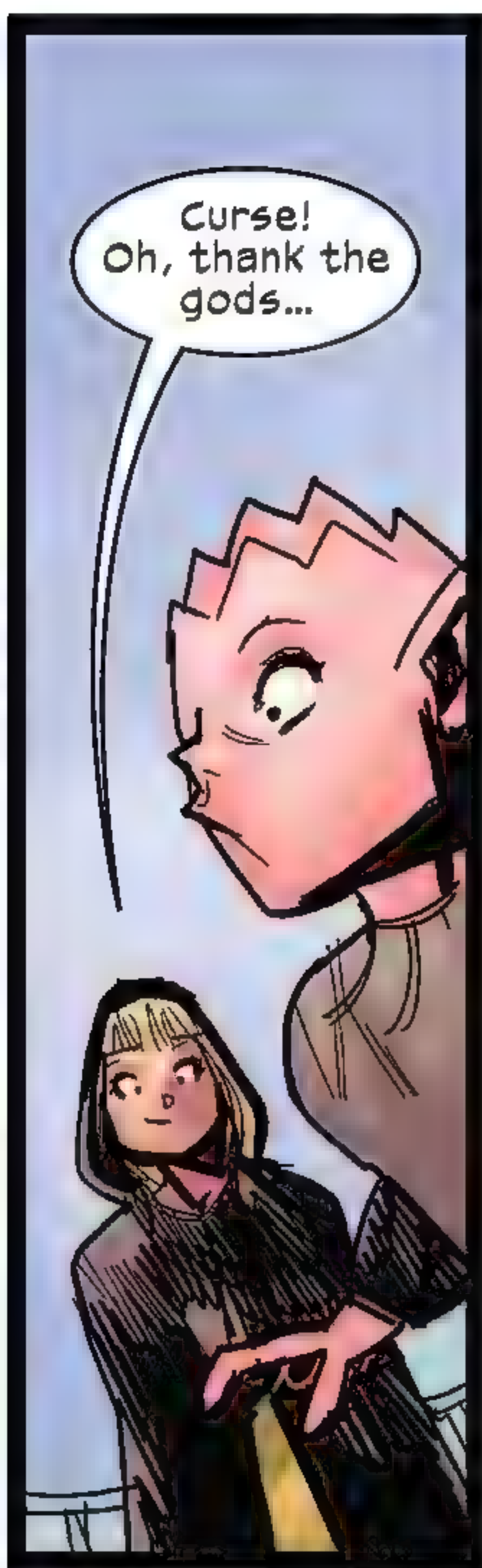
PULL!

--and mischief.

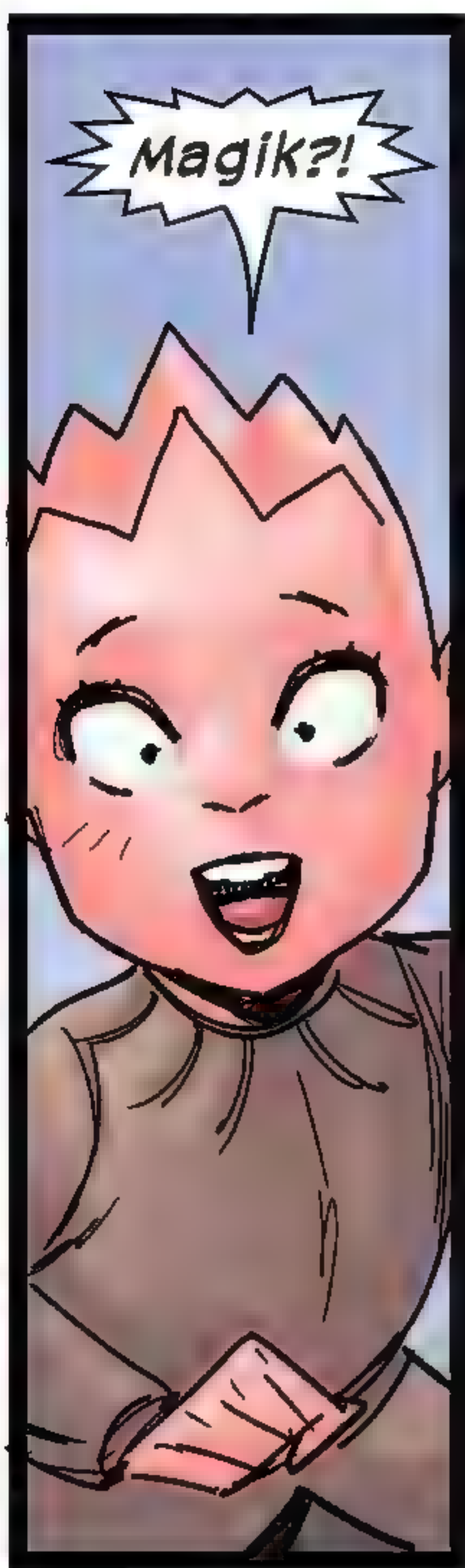


Curse?

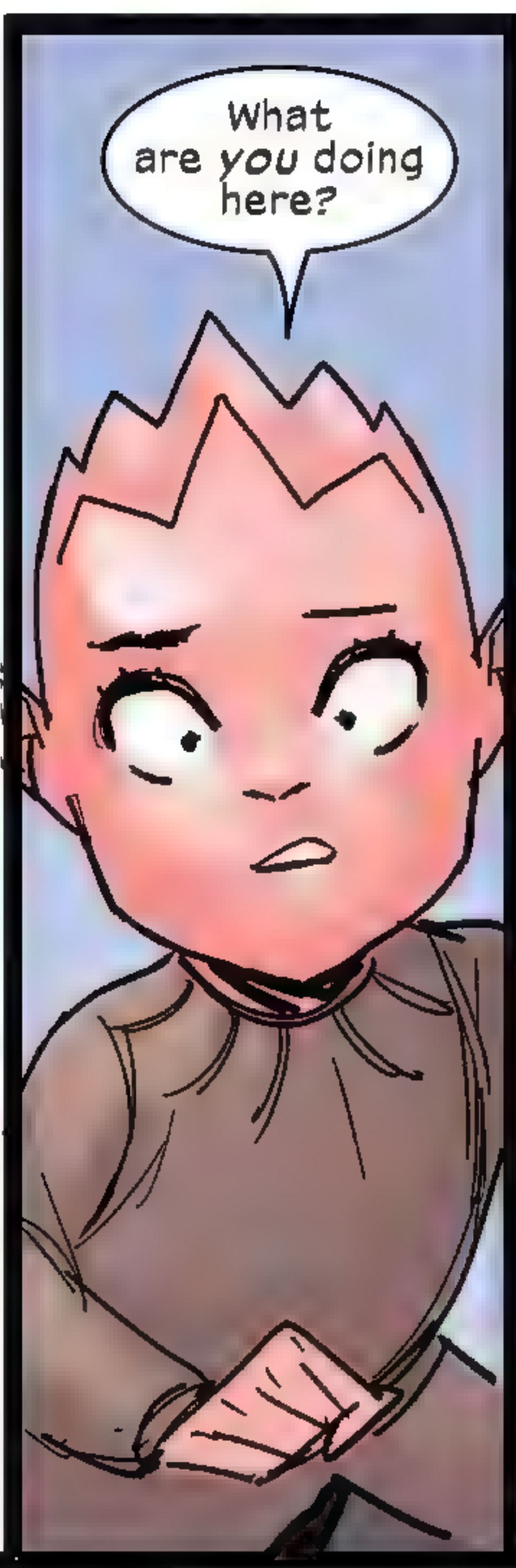
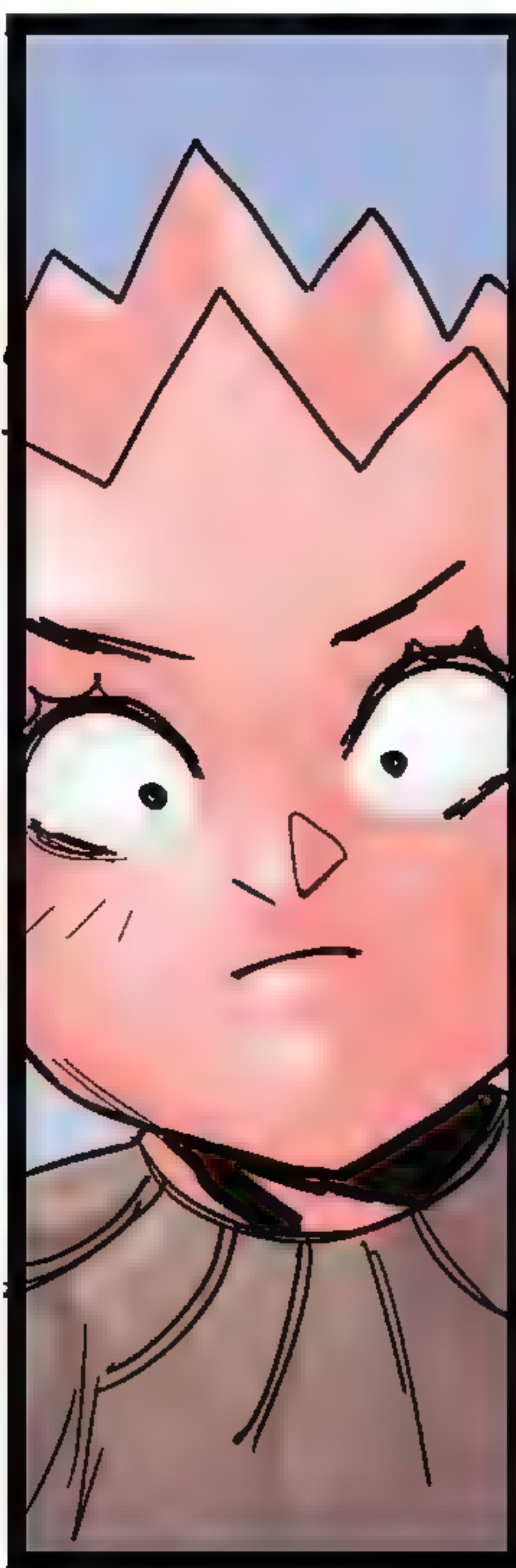
Very good, Lady Curse!



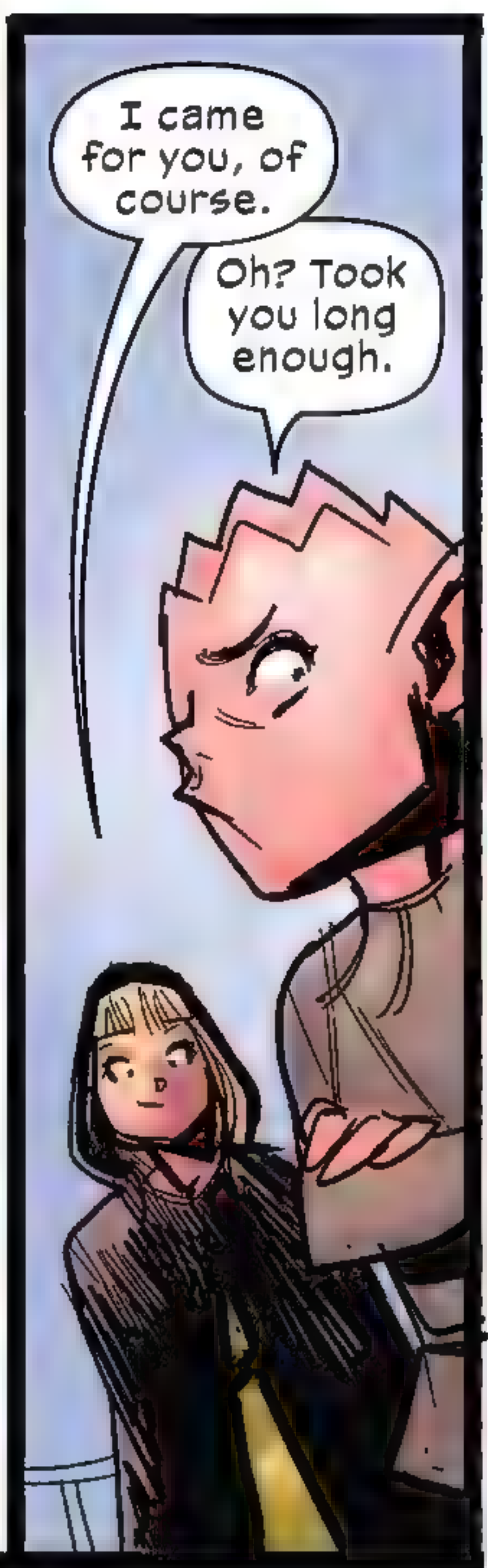
Curse!
Oh, thank the gods...



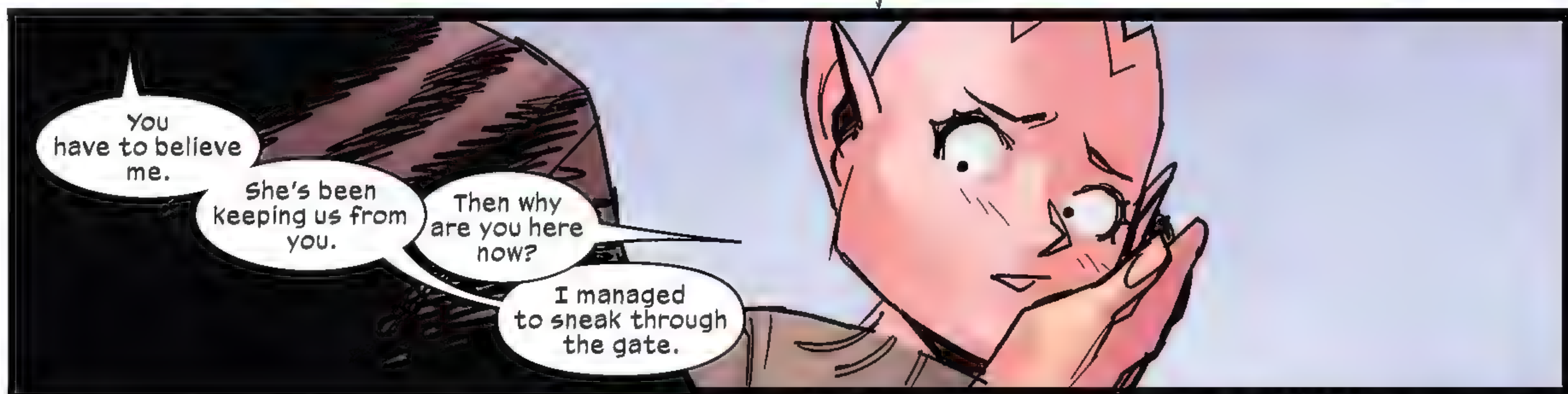
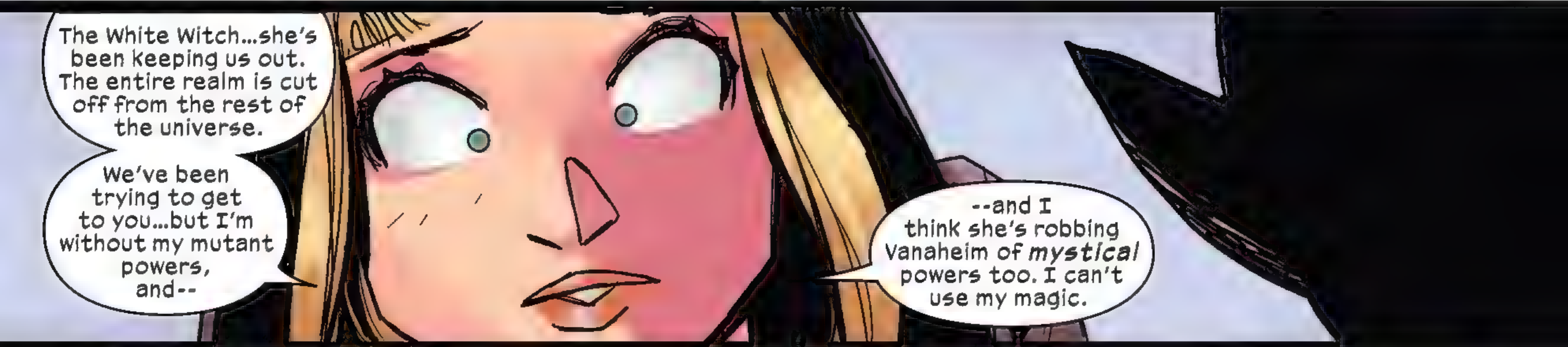
Magik?!

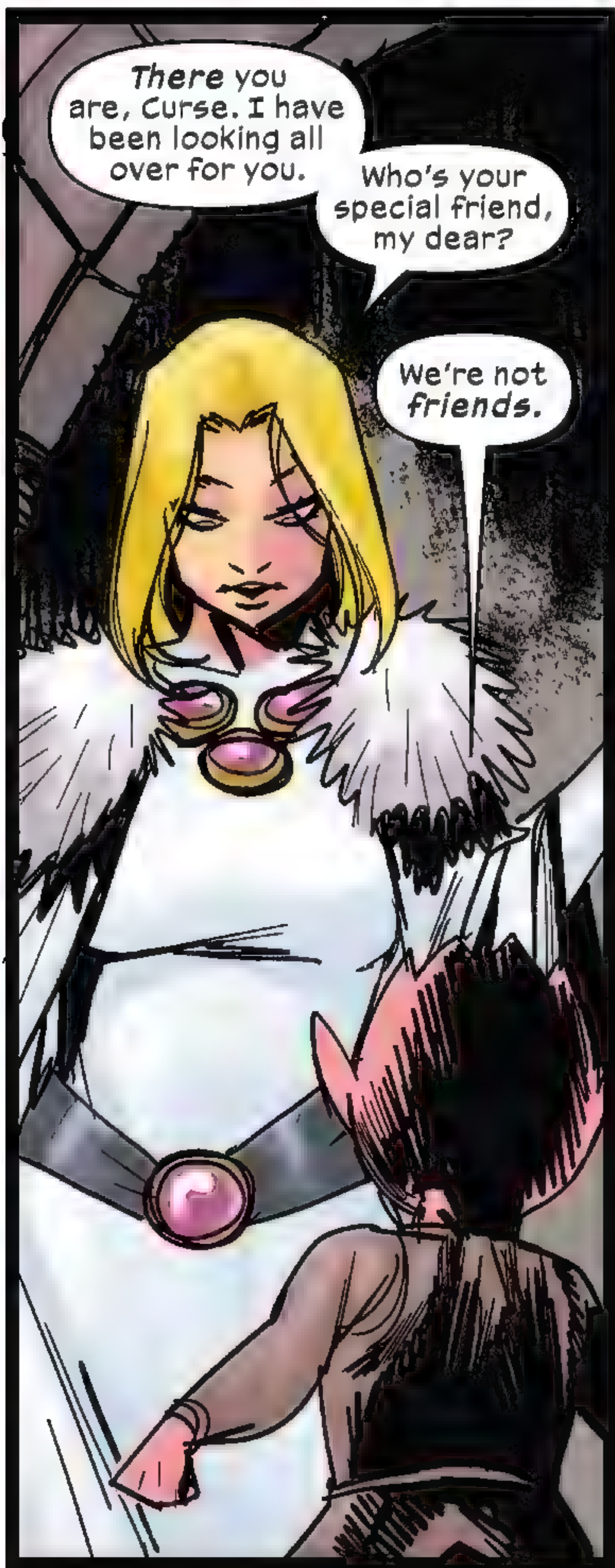


What are you doing here?



I came for you, of course.
Oh? Took you long enough.

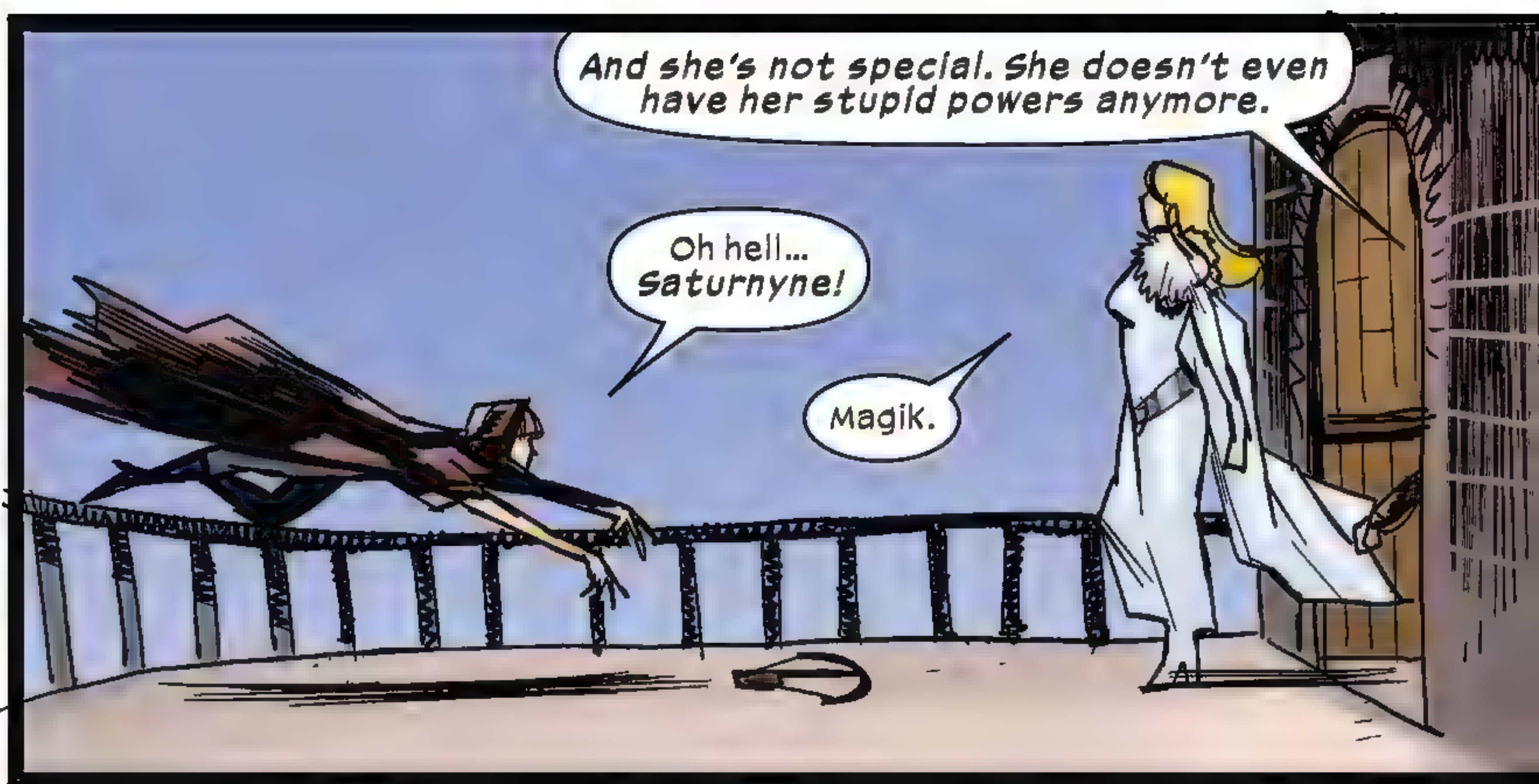




There you are, Curse. I have been looking all over for you.

Who's your special friend, my dear?

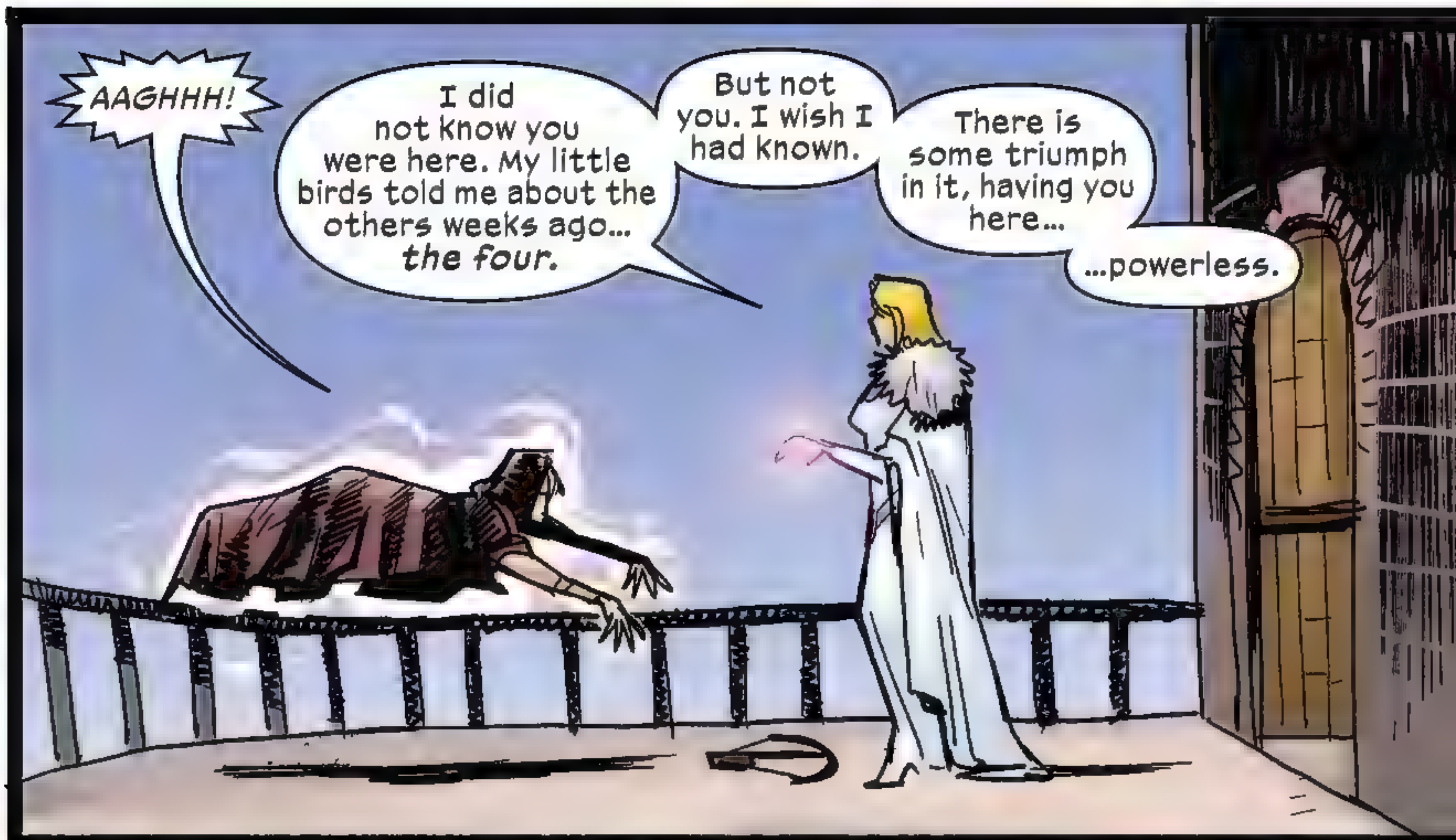
We're not friends.



And she's not special. She doesn't even have her stupid powers anymore.

Oh hell... Saturnyne!

Magik.



AAGHHH!

I did not know you were here. My little birds told me about the others weeks ago... *the four.*

But not you. I wish I had known.

There is some triumph in it, having you here...

...powerless.



Agrh...what... what are you doing here?

I am creating something new. A new realm. A new home. A new...center of operations.

Is it not a lovely place for it?



You're draining the realm of power. You're draining it of its very nature!

How long do you think Vanaheim will survive? How long before the woods and the winds change?

Sacrifices must be made, Magik.



But do not worry yourself about it. You will not be here for it.

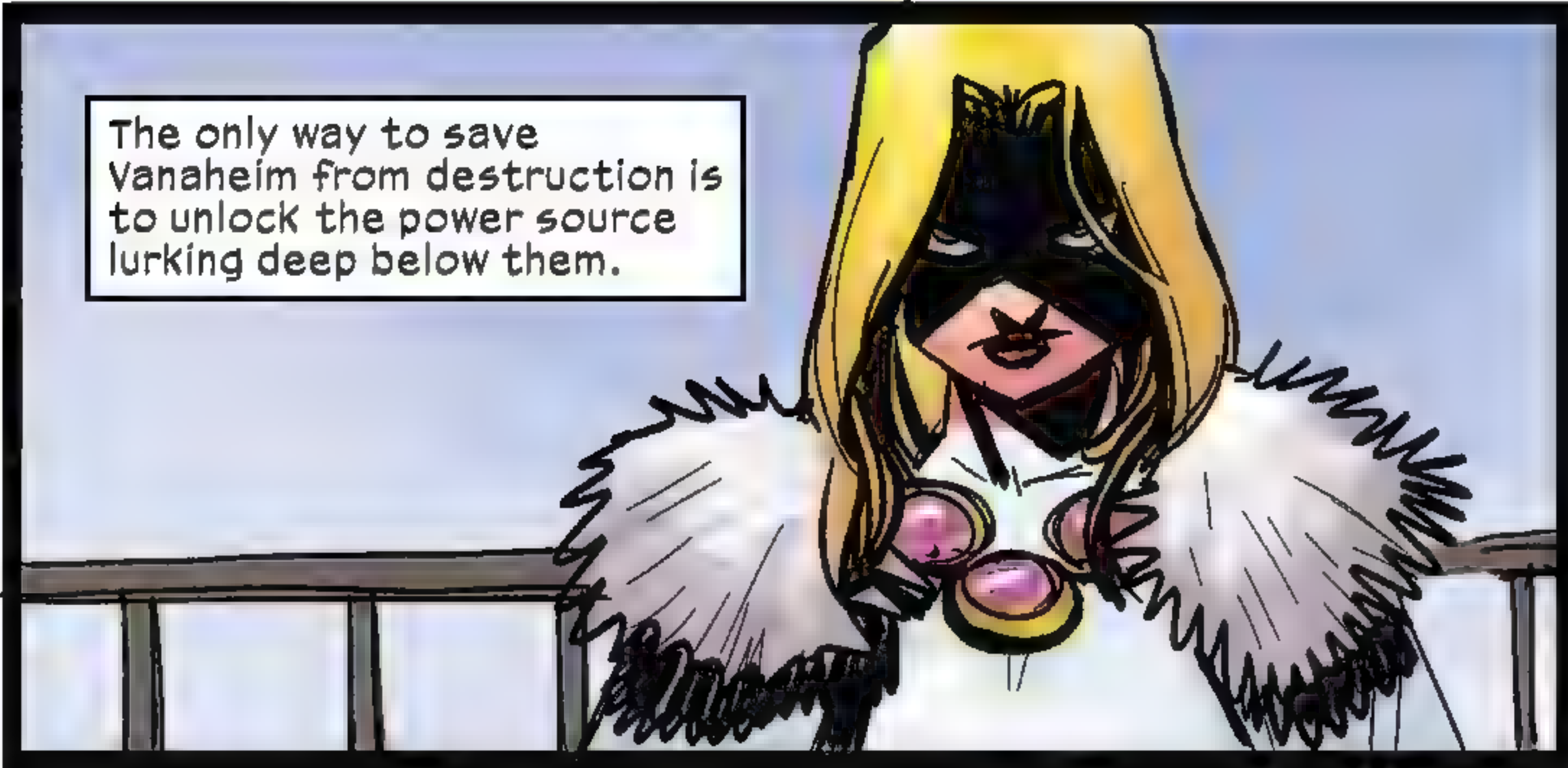
Tell me...

...how is it...being ordinary?

Saturnyne would never admit it, but Magik has a point.



Never mind. It hardly matters.



The only way to save Vanaheim from destruction is to unlock the power source lurking deep below them.



And for that she needs Curse.

Is she right?



Have you been keeping them from me?!

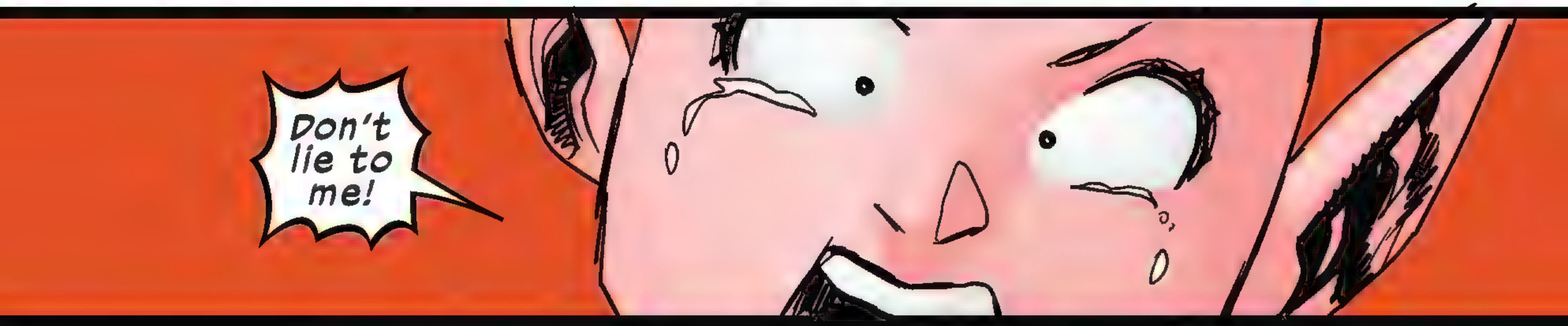
Mmm...

Do you believe *her* over me?



Are they here?! Were they looking for me all this time?

Last I checked, they were looking for ways to get back to Midgard, not looking for you.



Don't lie to me!



I'm not, sweetheart! And don't raise your voice at me.

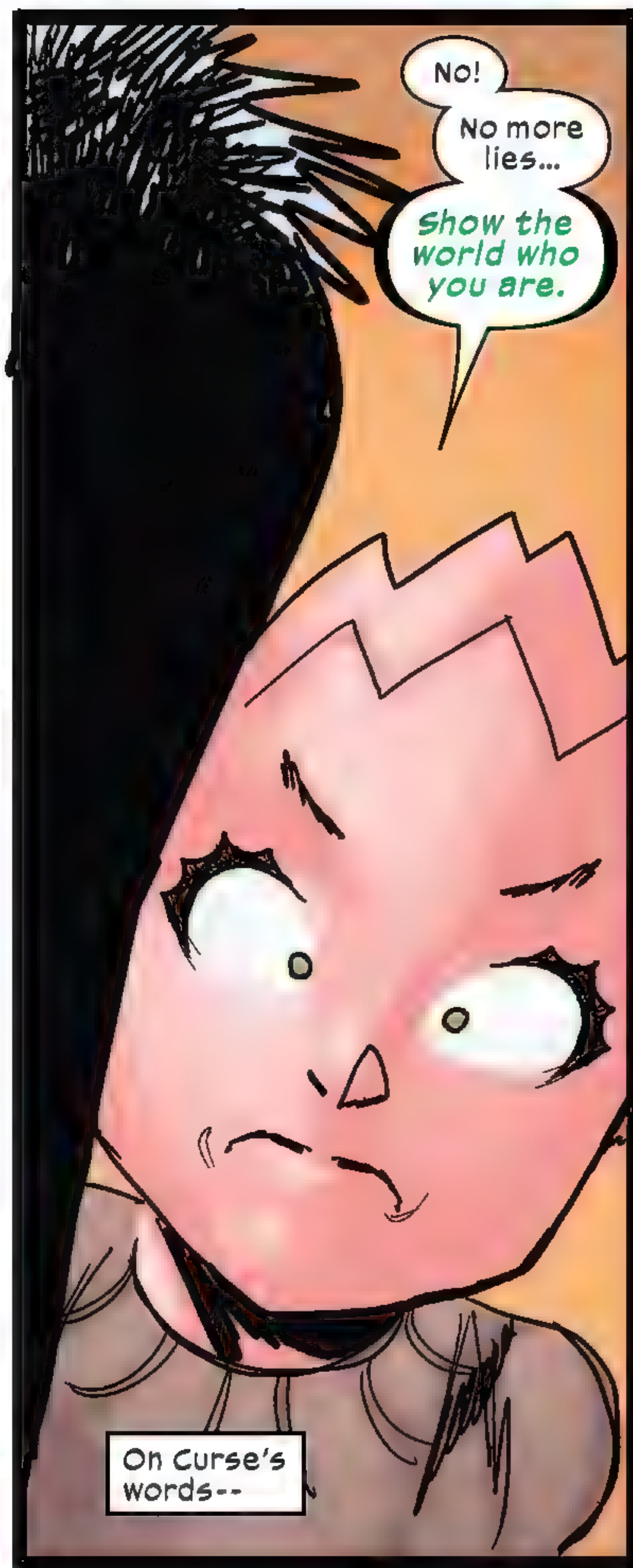
You are! You said they weren't looking for me! What else are you lying about?

What is this, Curse? I took you in, remember? When nobody else wanted you.



Are you keeping Vanaheim from the rest of the worlds? Are we trapped here? Is this your doing? Are they really traitors? The prisoners?

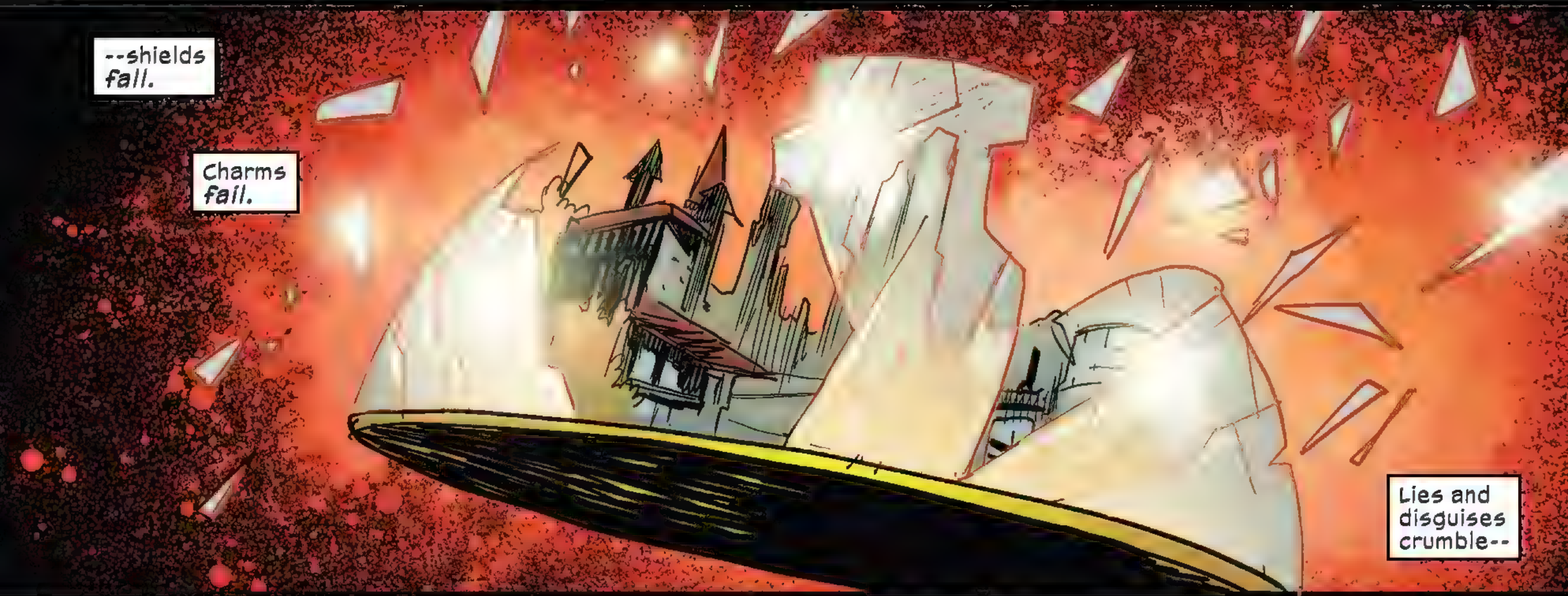
So many questions. I think what you need is a nap and a meal, my dear.



No!
No more lies...

Show the world who you are.

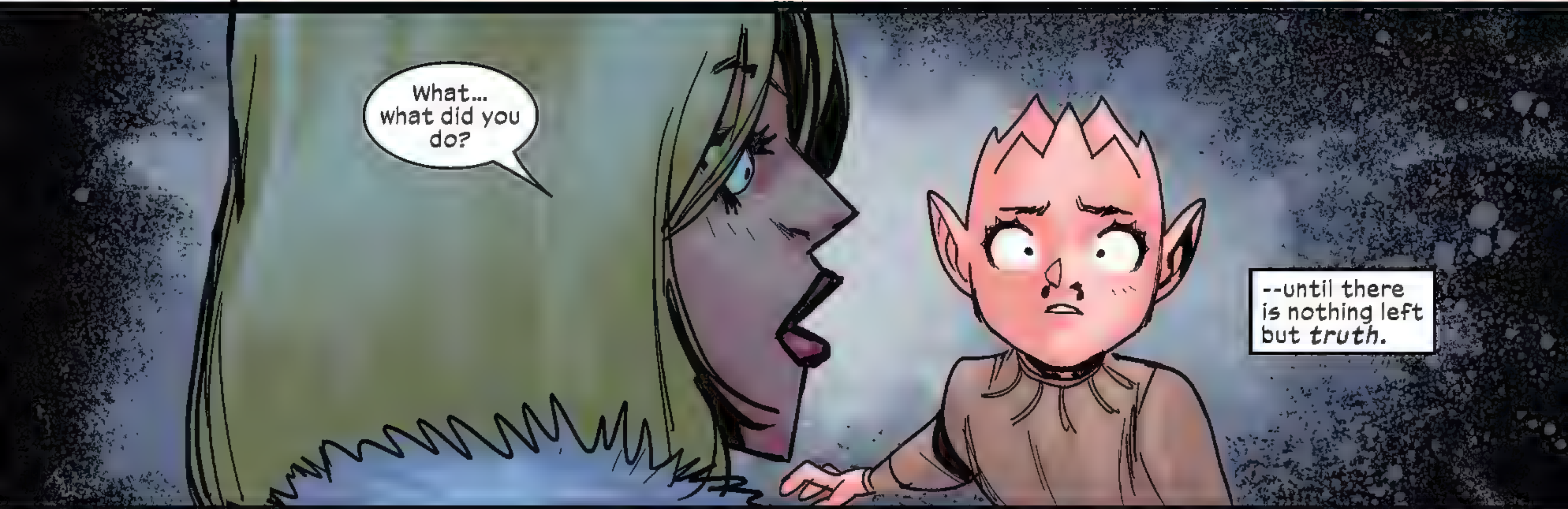
On Curse's words--



--shields fall.

Charms fall.

Lies and disguises crumble--



What... what did you do?

--until there is nothing left but truth.

Moments before.

As she falls to her death, Magik tries to remember a moment in time.

A memory she has worked hard to forget.

"My little snowflake."

"There are so many kinds of powers."

"Yet you reach for the obvious."

You reach for the magic in the wind and earth--

--you try to summon chaos--

I...I CAN'T DO IT, BELASCO! IT... BURNS!

Well, yes... but it is the only way.

There is magic in despair.

There is magic in words that hurt more than blades.

In the echoes of screams of pain--

--in fallen tears--

--in cold sweat--

--there is power in the misery of the world.

Use it.

(She remembers.)



The Promised Day



In Asgard,
Sif sees all.

Every moment
of every life.

She sees the joy,
the grief, the love
and the betrayals.

But it is what the
All-Seer did not
see that strikes
fear in her heart.

It takes extraordinary powers
to hide from Sif's sight.

(Saturnyne is
extraordinary,
after all.)

But on Curse's
jinx, her magic
fails.

The invisible walls
that were hiding
Vanaheim crumble,
and Sif can see the
realm once more.

WHAT
DID YOU
DO?!

She calls her
king when she
sees the fury
of the witch.

And she feels her heart fall
when she sees the one they
call Magik summon powers
best left alone.

What is it,
All-Seer?

Because she
knows this
means--

War, my
king.

Emberstone
Citadel,
Vanaheim.

WHAT
DID YOU
DO?!

Now there will
be war. The prophecy will be
fulfilled. You cannot beat
fate, Saturnyne.

You
ungrateful little
beast!

I took
you in!

Despite--

--despite
what you
are.

Despite
your *incessant*
yapping, your
ignorance, your
selfishness--

You
lied!

You're a
silly little girl.
You can't fathom
what I'm trying
to do!

You don't
understand the
first thing about
sacrifices!

TK-
TAT-
TK-
TAT

You kept
me from my
friends!

Oh, but
you have no
friends, Curse.
Who would want
to be your
friend?

In life,
you can either
be *loved* or you
can be *useful*.

You are
quite *unlovable*,
but--

Saturnyne's
words cut
deep.

TKT-
TKT

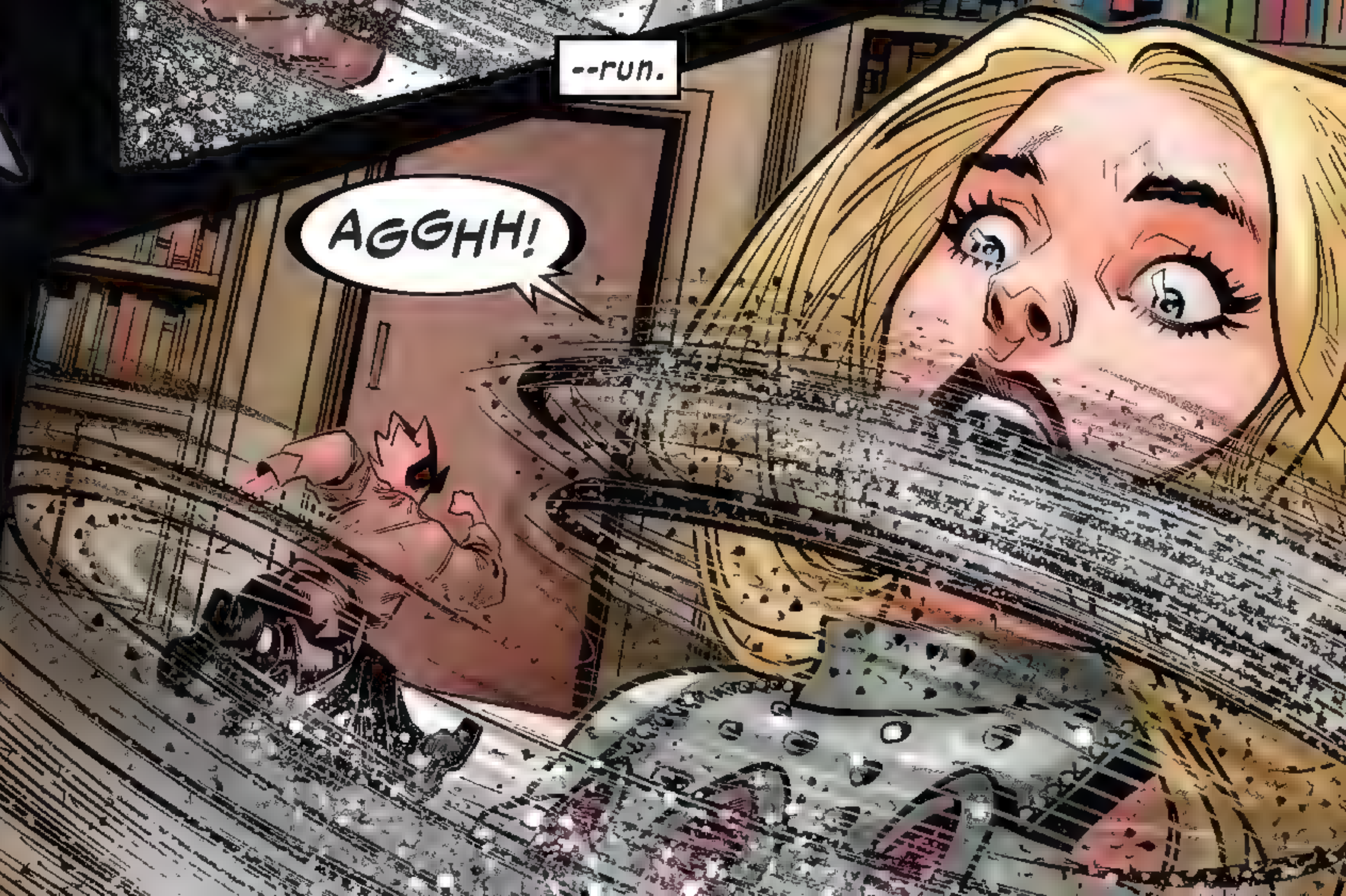
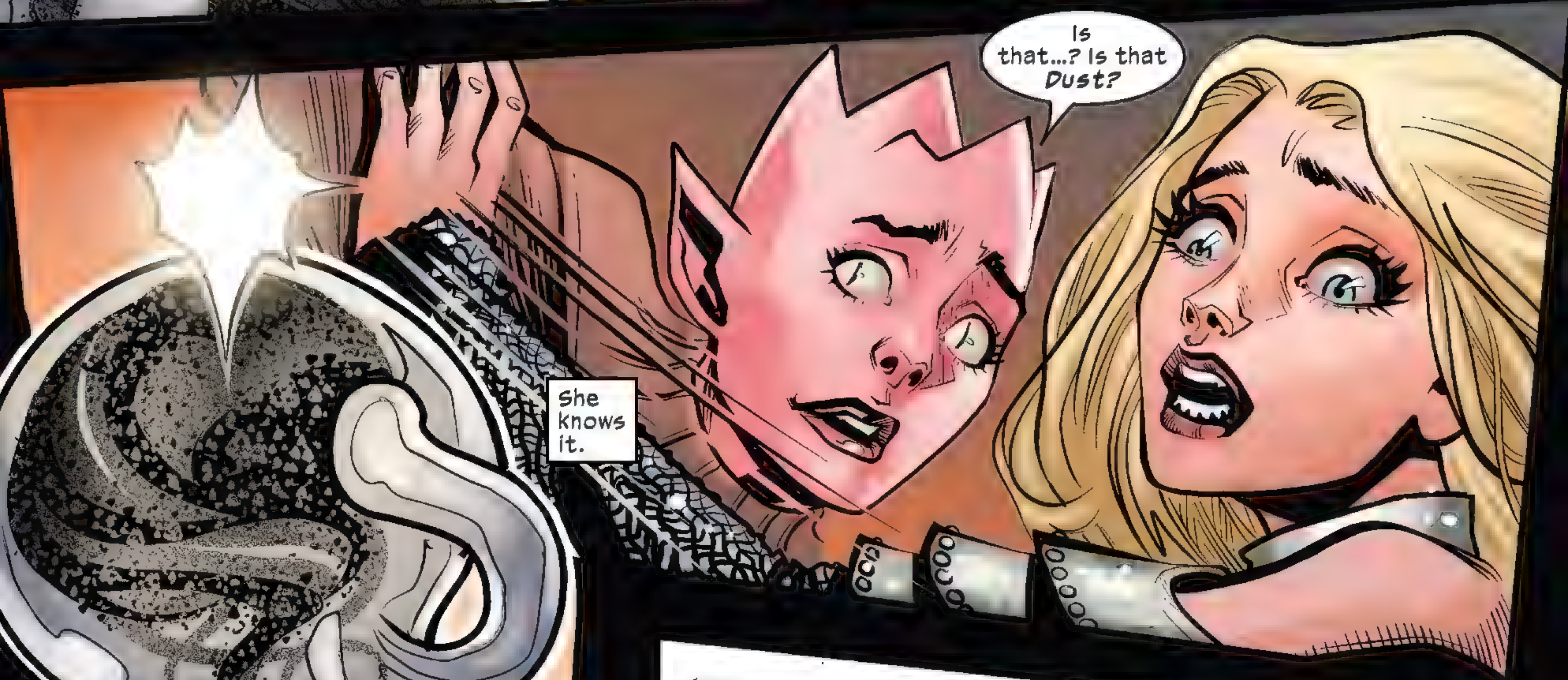
But there is
another sound
in the room.

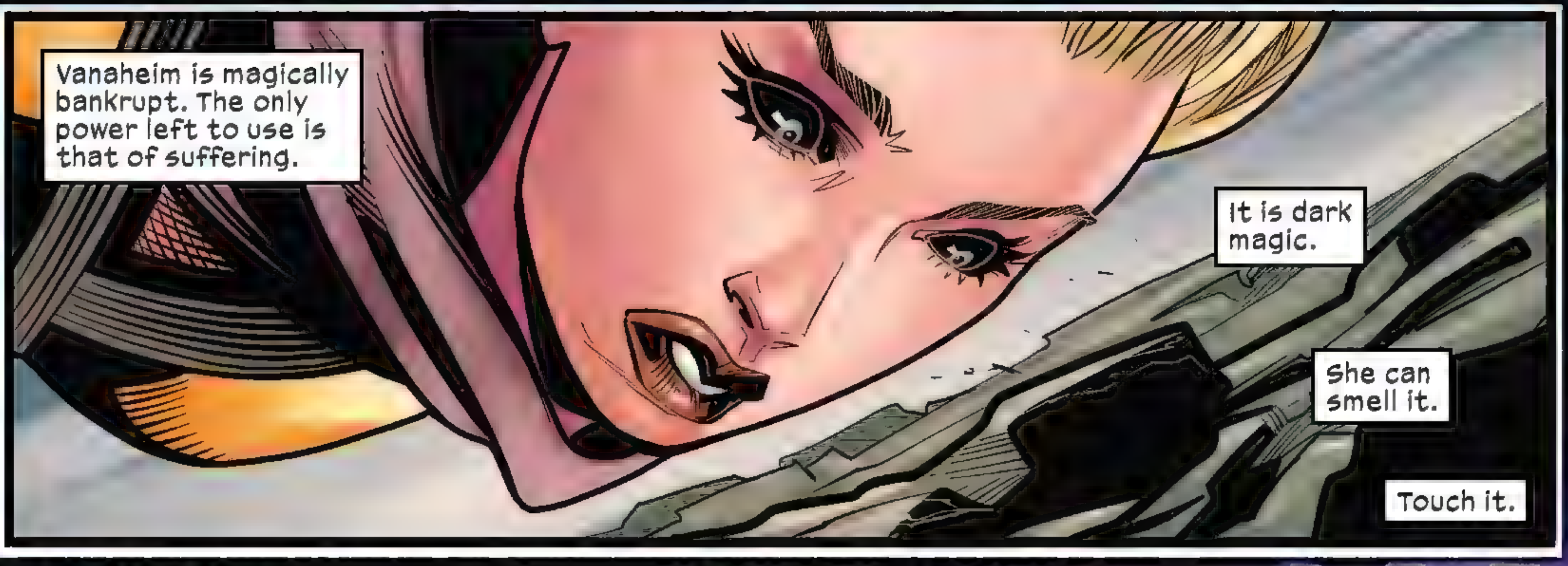
A whisper.

--I'm giving
you a chance to
do something that
matters. Something
that will change
the universe.

What is
that?

TKT-TT-
TKT-TKT-
TAT-TKT



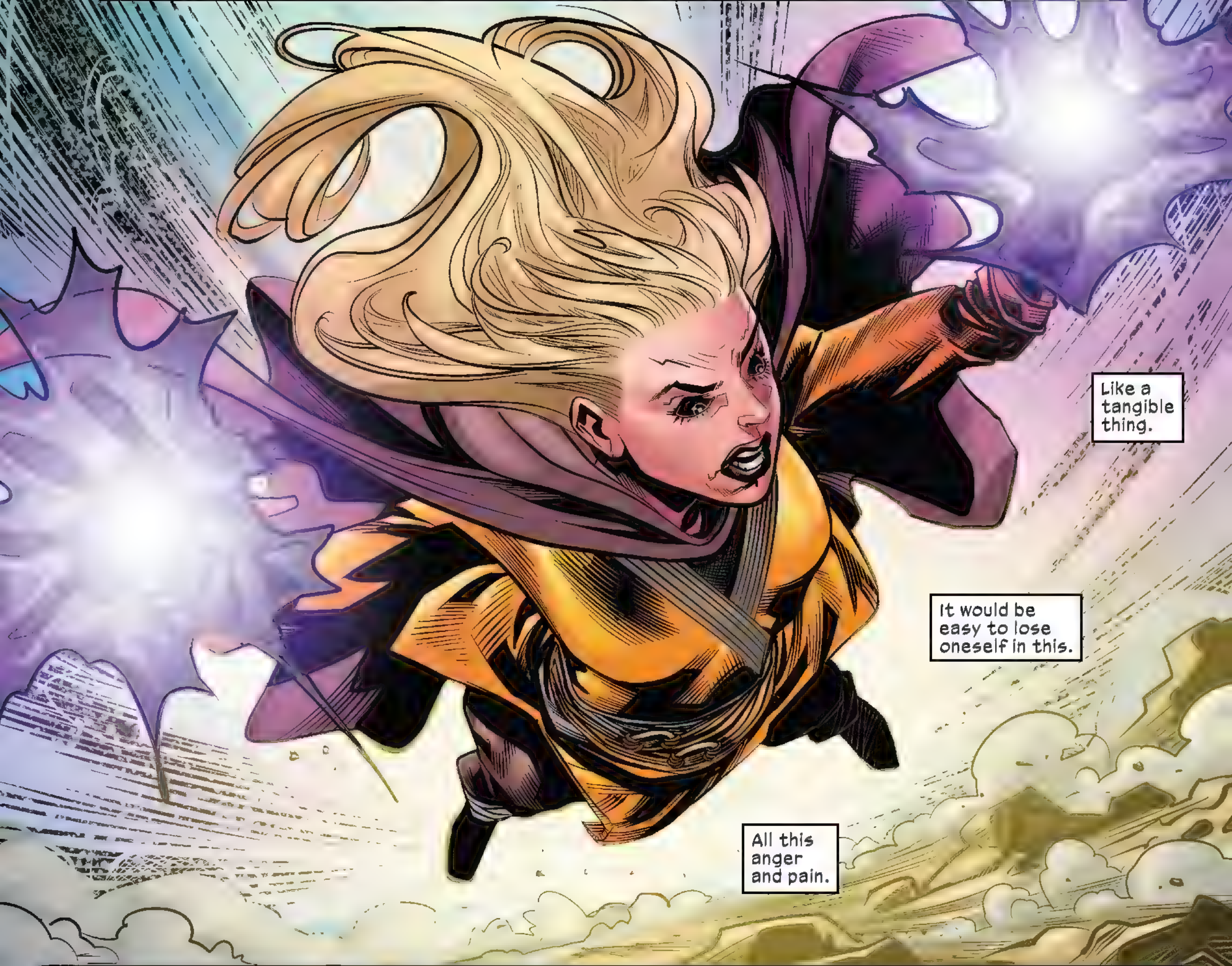


Vanaheim is magically bankrupt. The only power left to use is that of suffering.

It is dark magic.

She can smell it.

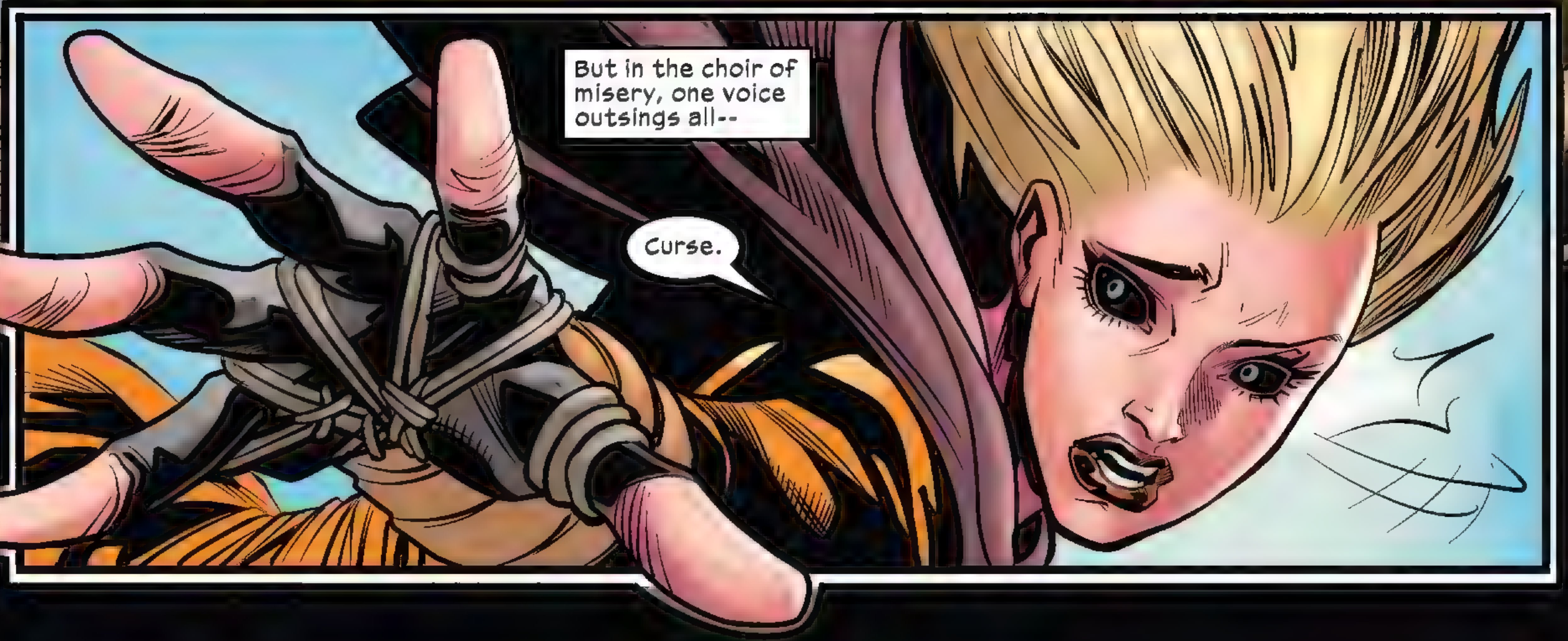
Touch it.



Like a tangible thing.

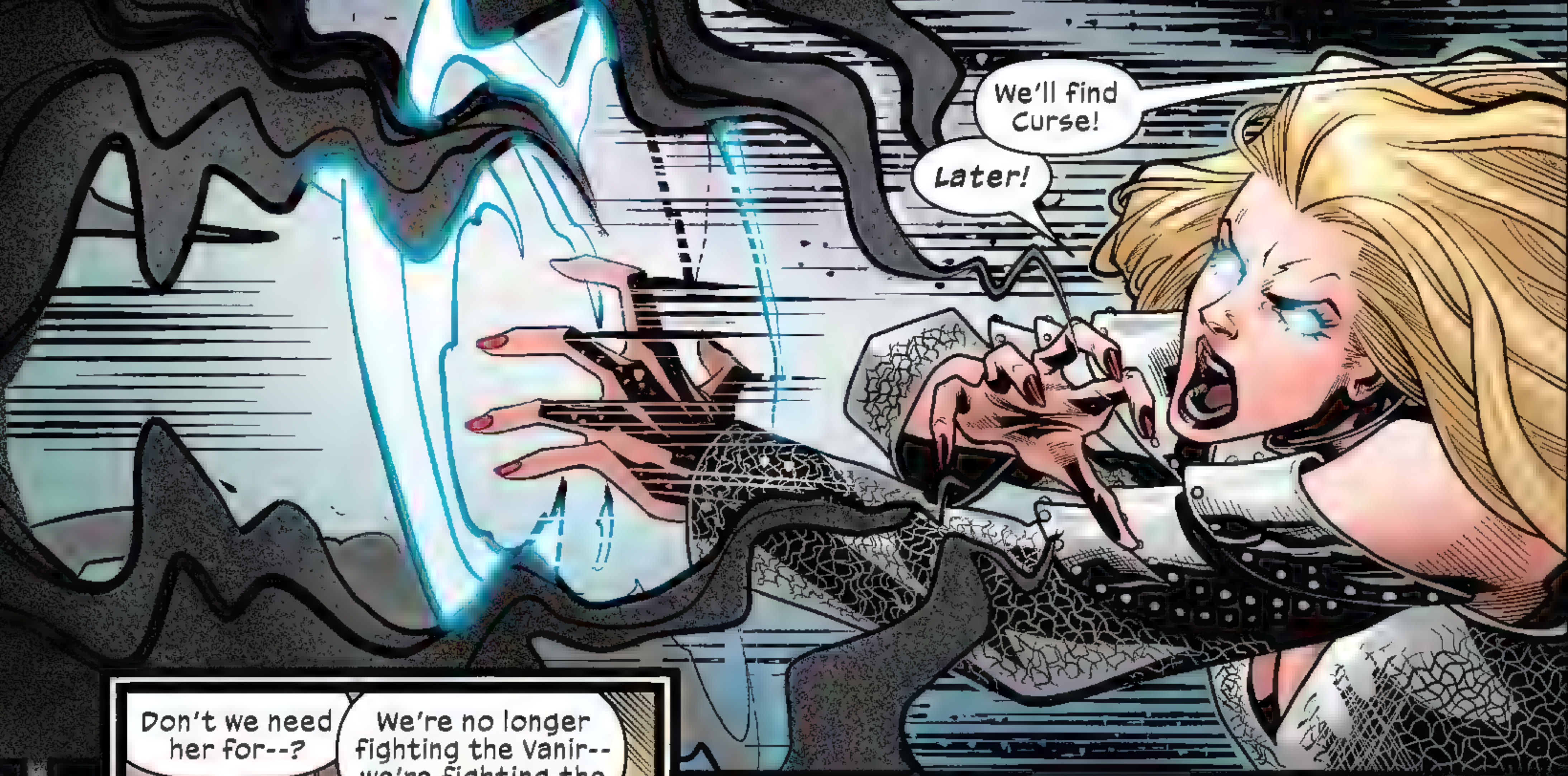
It would be easy to lose oneself in this.

All this anger and pain.



But in the choir of misery, one voice outsings all--

Curse.



We'll find
Curse!

Later!

Don't we need
her for--?

We're no longer
fighting the Vanir--
we're fighting the
universe.

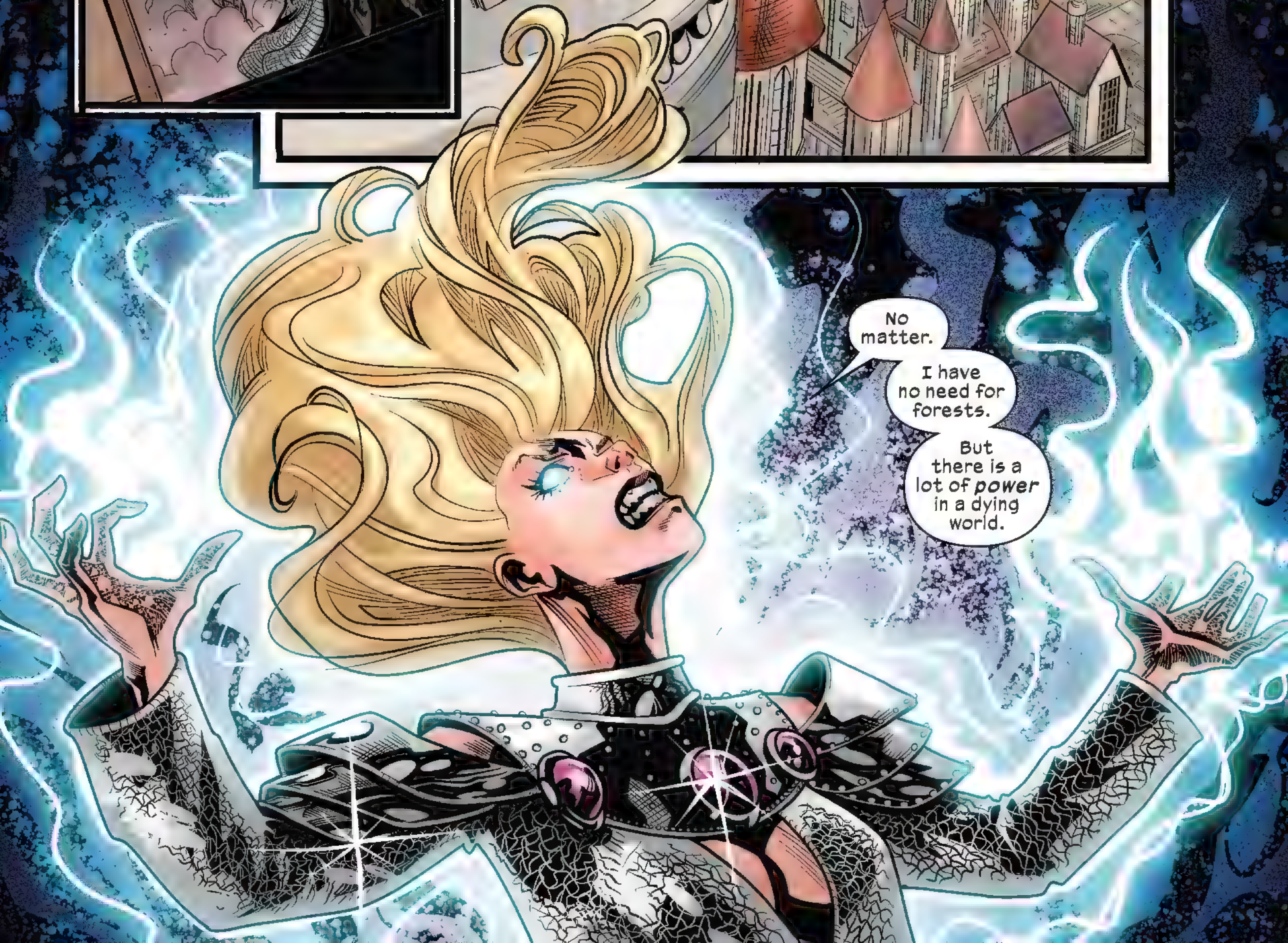
The
enemy
is at our
doorstep.
More will
come.

We need
to get the
army here.



But
without the
source--

Without
the source,
we will *bleed*
the realm
dry.



No
matter.

I have
no need for
forests.

But
there is a
lot of *power*
in a dying
world.

We have tried everything to return the power source to Vanaheim, to no avail. The failure burns in my heart. The patience of our queen has come to an end, and she has decided to draw power from the realm -- from Vanaheim -- instead.

The queen seems to believe that standing on dying ground might be enough to convince Curse to act -- to use her strange powers to bring us the source -- but only a fool would rely on the selflessness of a child. Especially that child.

In my heart, I grieve. I grieve for the Vanir, too stubborn to accept what Saturnyne offers. I grieve for the beauty of the world and the innocence that walks upon it. I grieve for the trees that will burn and the mountains that will crumble.

But I have seen Saturnyne's vision. I know her heart. I know the sacrifice will be worth it in the end.

All great empires are built on blood and ash. In a few years, when our queen rules Vanaheim as the center of the joined universes, as it was always meant to be, and when knowledge and resources are traded across dimensions and time, we will not dwell on the loss of today.

But for now, war is upon us. May Saturnyne have mercy on their souls.

Tsanna, diary entry #231

The Vanir Front,
seconds before.

It is a stolen
moment.

I wanted
to say...

...if I die
today, I feel
lucky to have
met you.

To
have known
you.

You
don't know me,
Vonos.

There is
no world
around
them--

Sure I
do, Mary.

--there is
no war--

You don't
know the first
thing--

--no battle.
No prophecy.

Only his touch
and her lips.

Sure I do,
Mary.

I would
beg you not
to fight, but
I know you
will.

How
do you
know?

And when
the world
returns--

ROUUMBBLEEE

--it bleeds.



Life is drained
from the world.

This
is it.

The forest screams
as the trees die--

Don't
just stand there,
Dani!

Do
something!

Nice
to see you,
Mary!

--the wind
whimpers--



--and fate
laughs.



Curse! We know you're in here! Come out and play, you little @%&%!

We can finally kill the little br--



ZRRRRCK

The *source* glitters in silence.

The only sound in the room is that of melting flesh.



It is mesmerizing.

There, yet not there at all.

Magik! You...you came back!

Of course. I was never going to leave you with Saturnyne.



I'm so sorry!

I'm... Yuck. I got soldier on me.

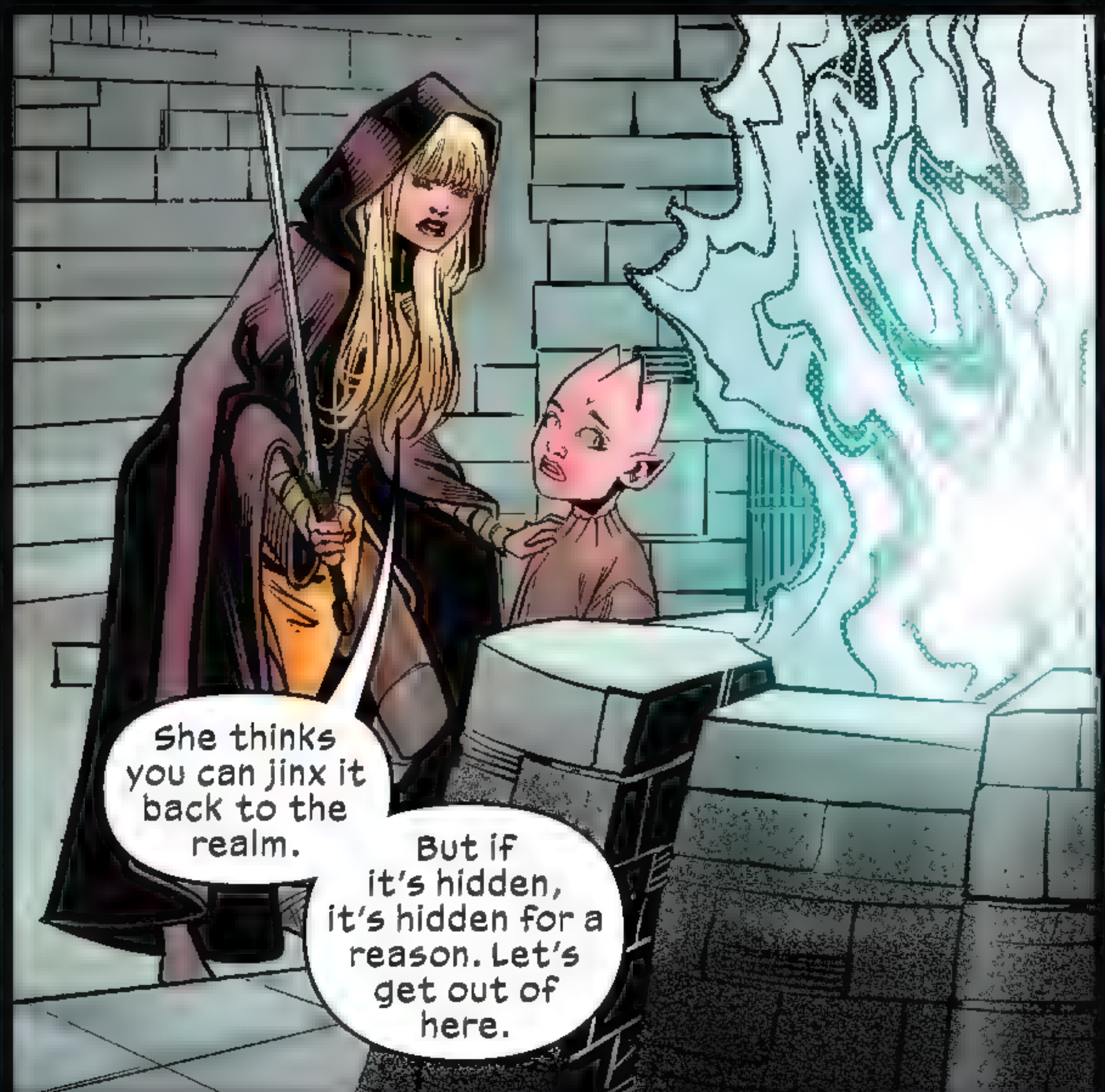
We can take care of-- wait, what is *that*?



I think it's what she wants from me.

It's like a power...thing. It's hidden in another dimension.

Which is kinda cool, I have to admit. But I don't know what I'm supposed to do--



She thinks you can jinx it back to the realm.

But if it's hidden, it's hidden for a reason. Let's get out of here.

Saturnyne wanted slaughter.

She got a battle instead.

Saturnyne watches the fight with unease.



KABOOM



Found the fuel tanks!

It's about to get hot in here.

Saturnyne is living through the prophecy.

Every step she takes feels predetermined.

(She resents it.)

We're running out of time.

Forward! Leave none alive!

The prophesied event will happen soon.

The *moment* that changes everything.

Our forces are proceeding at a steady pace. The rebels will all be dead by the end of the day.

You don't understand. We are fighting fate. Is this truly the best you can do?

She still believes Curse is the key to it all.

Saturnyne must either change the child's mind--

SUMMON THE GROVERS!

--or kill her.

As death rains from above--

Where are we going? I can't see anything!

It's Dust! Follow the storm!

--Sooraya guides them through the battlefield.

Bringing them together.

Oh no, did you forget how to use your muscles?

Magik! Curse! You're alive!

Hells yes! And she got her magic back!

AIIIEEEEEEE!

...How? Are you okay, Magik?

This is not my magic.

This is wild and dark magic.

Where is Mary?

She's over--

--there.

WATCH OUT!

Get out of range, Mary! RUN!

We're not dying here, Vonos!

Curse hears
a whisper in
the wind.

This is
your fault,
Curse.

NOOOOOO!



Saturnyne's
voice is sweet
and lovely.

You could
have stopped
this before it
began.



Wh-what?
Me?

You could
stop it now,
yet you choose
not to.

Know, Curse...
that when they
die, it will be
your fault.

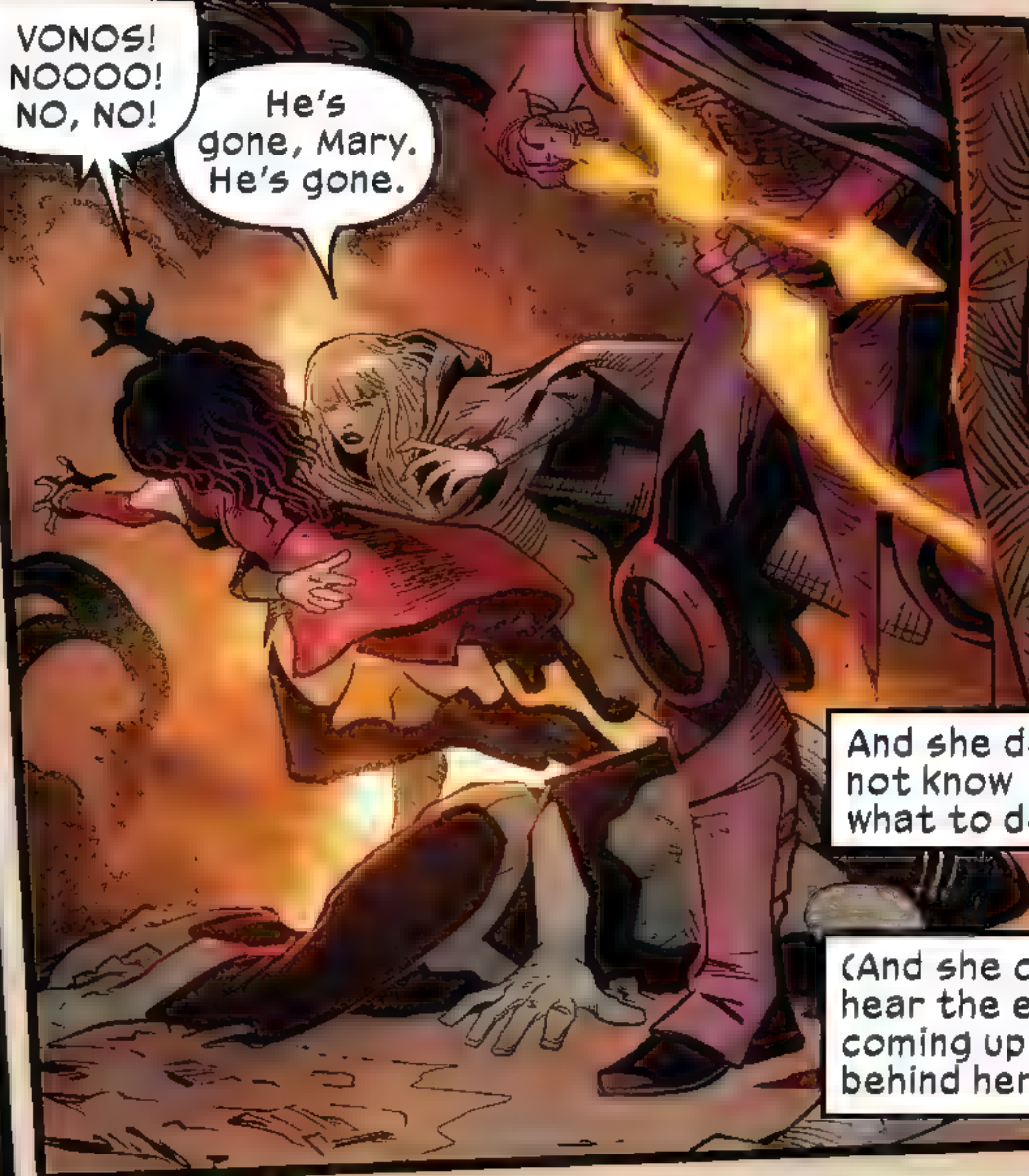
That's
not true!
You lie!



Curse cannot
tell if it is
real or not.

VONOS!
NOOOO!
NO, NO!

He's
gone, Mary.
He's gone.



And she does
not know
what to do.

(And she cannot
hear the enemy
coming up
behind her.)

KRUUUUMBBLEEE

What is
that?

It's
hope.

NO! It's
too @&%*##@
little, too bloody
late!



While Thor Odinson
sees the death of
his allies--

--Freyja Freyrdottir
sees the death of
her home.

It tears her
heart to
pieces.

UNHAND
THAT PINK
CHILD!

Saturnyne,
you have deceived
our eyes.

You have
attacked our
ally.

The mercy of
Asgard extends
only so far. We will
accept your surrender
now, or we will
fight you to
the end.

"The
mercy of
Asgard"?

Eh, kind
of NPC. Like,
who talks like
that?

np--
what?

Sif! Use
the Bifrost and
get the children
and wounded
out of here.

I'm not
a child...

FORWARD!

This is the moment.

The final seconds of the future.

Come back to me, Curse. I will stop this. I will bring them back. I will make it all better.

Just come back to me. Give me what I need...or die and get out of my way.

Saturnyne knows her time is running out. Even if she is winning, even if her forces overwhelm those of Asgard and Vanaheim combined, she fears the twist of fate.

As she orders the death of the child, her sweet words travel across the battlefield.

A desperate act to reach the child.

It's not going to be enough, is it?

You can't think like that. We need to keep fighting!

No...for every ship he takes down, two more come through the rip!

And he's, like, a god!

Dani! We need to get Curse out of here! Saturnyne is sending everyone after her.

Sif! Can you hear us? Curse needs to--

NO! I'm not going!



Curse,
Saturnyne's trying
to kill you!

Why does
she want Curse
dead so bad?



What would
it take to make
it live again? The
realm? The people?
Can you bring
them back?

There's no
magic that *truly*
makes something
live again,
Curse.



There must be.
Saturnyne said
there was!

If we stop
Saturnyne, *new*
life can flourish here.
The ancient trees
are still holding
on.

The world
is not dead
yet. We can't
give up!

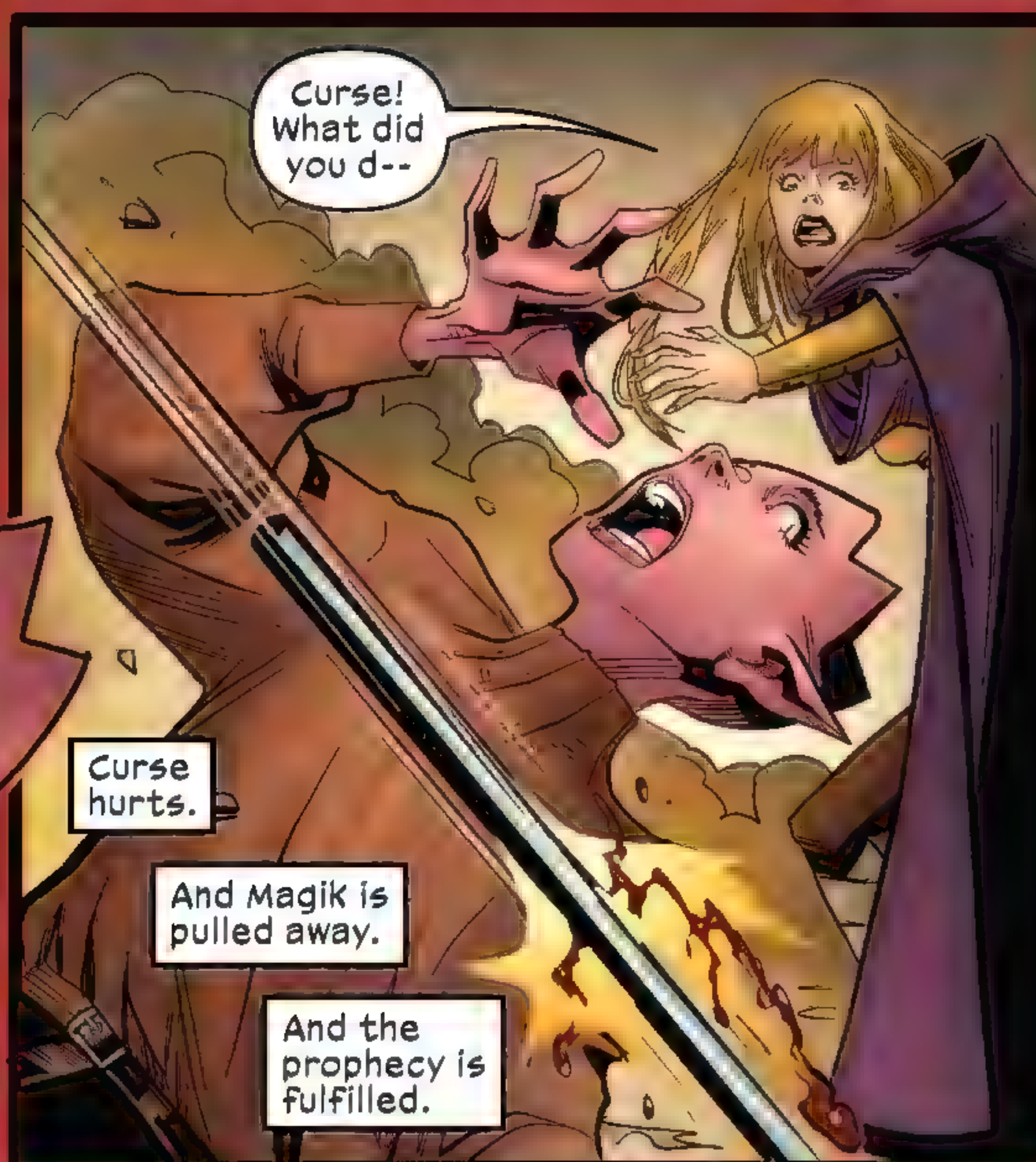
But
there is no
way to bring
back what
is lost.



As the moment of
prophecy arrives on the
battlefield, Curse must
make a choice...

...and so
she does.

I...
Wouldn't
it be cool if
Magik got what that
power-hungry
witch wants?

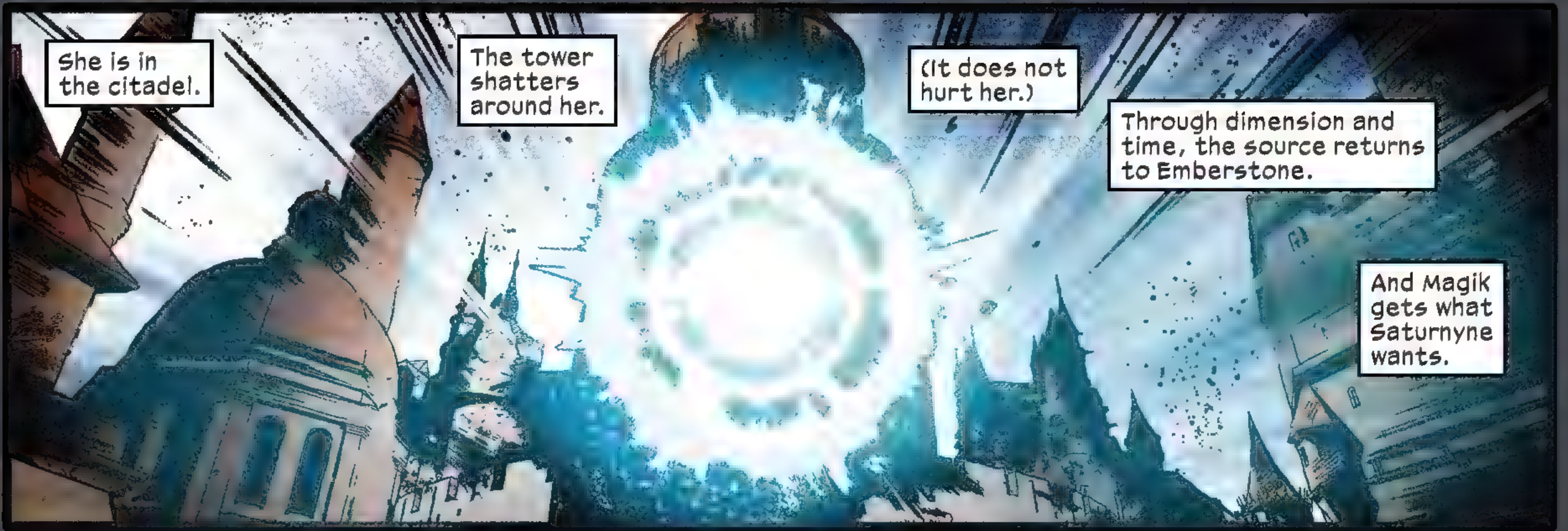


Curse!
What did
you d--

Curse
hurts.

And Magik is
pulled away.

And the
prophecy is
fulfilled.



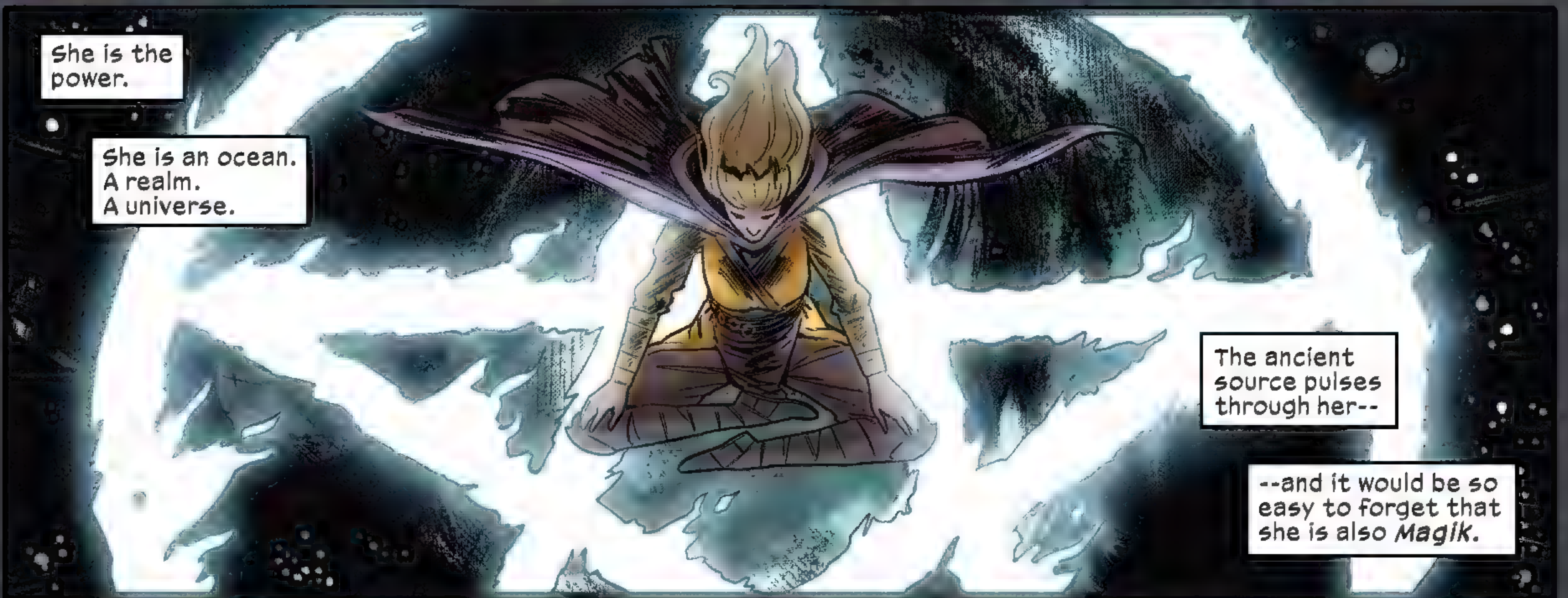
She is in
the citadel.

The tower
shatters
around her.

(It does not
hurt her.)

Through dimension and
time, the source returns
to Emberstone.

And Magik
gets what
Saturnyne
wants.



She is the
power.

She is an ocean.
A realm.
A universe.

The ancient
source pulses
through her--

--and it would be so
easy to forget that
she is also *Magik*.



But she
remembers
Curse--

--and
Curse
hurts.

And then she
remembers
everything.



She heals the sky
with a thought--

--but the power
pulls and tears
inside of her--

--too great
for one person
to hold.



So she gives power
back to the realm.

New grass emerges.

Soft winds envelop them.

The power sinks into the soil like water in a desert.

New life in all the death.

(She cannot bring them back.)

A memory of an acorn flickers through her mind.

Magik once tried to make a tree grow.

Now thousands wake on her command.

The last of the enemy falls in the distance.

But Magik's eyes are on Mary, searching through the bodies on the ground.

She feels her agony like it is her own.

Curse does not stir.

But Sooraya prays.

And there is still hope in her heart.



A few days later.

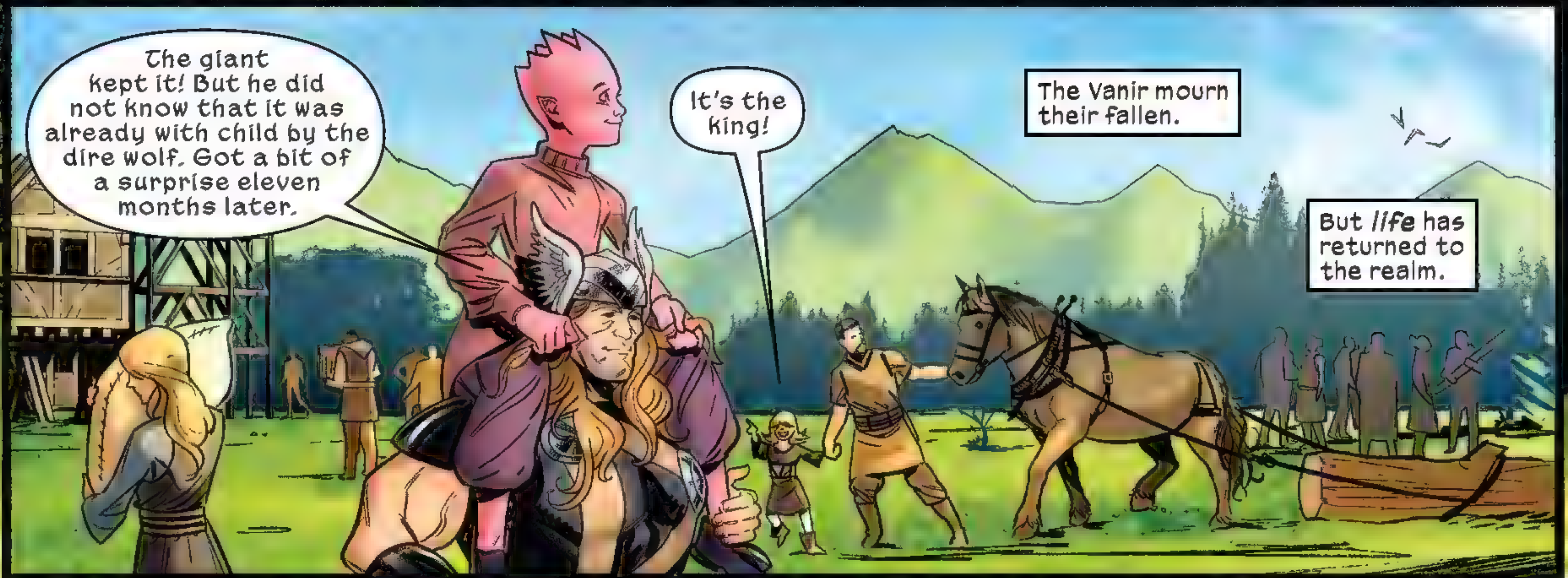
The future has returned to Vanaheim.

It is in the wind--

--in the water--

--in the very air they breathe.

So, what happened to the horse?

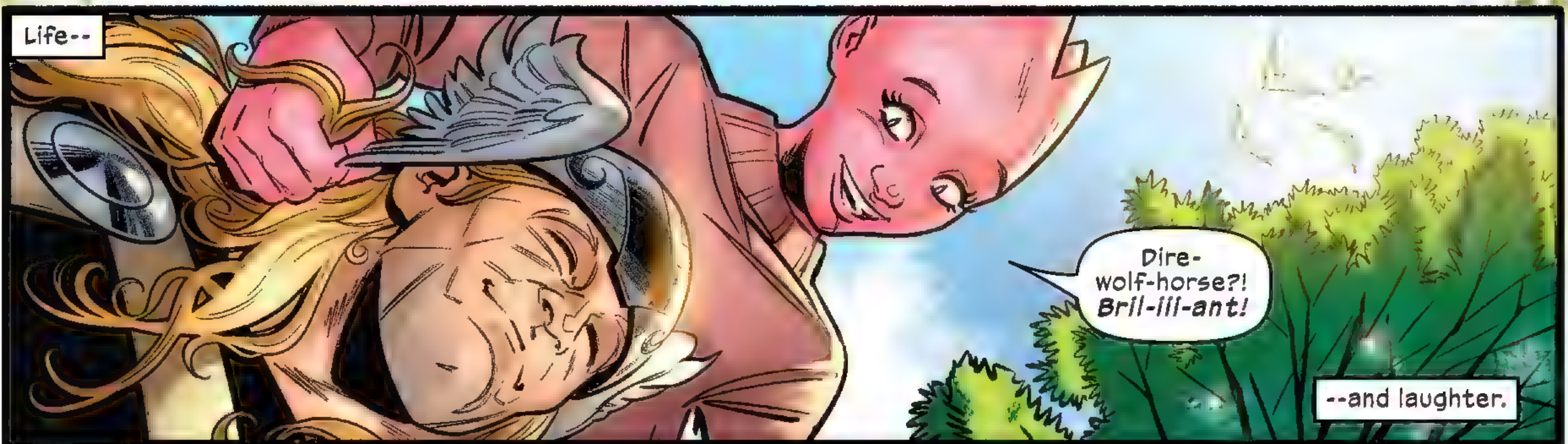


The giant kept it! But he did not know that it was already with child by the dire wolf. Got a bit of a surprise eleven months later.

It's the king!

The Vanir mourn their fallen.

But *life* has returned to the realm.



Life--

Dire-wolf-horse?!
Bril-ill-ant!

--and laughter.

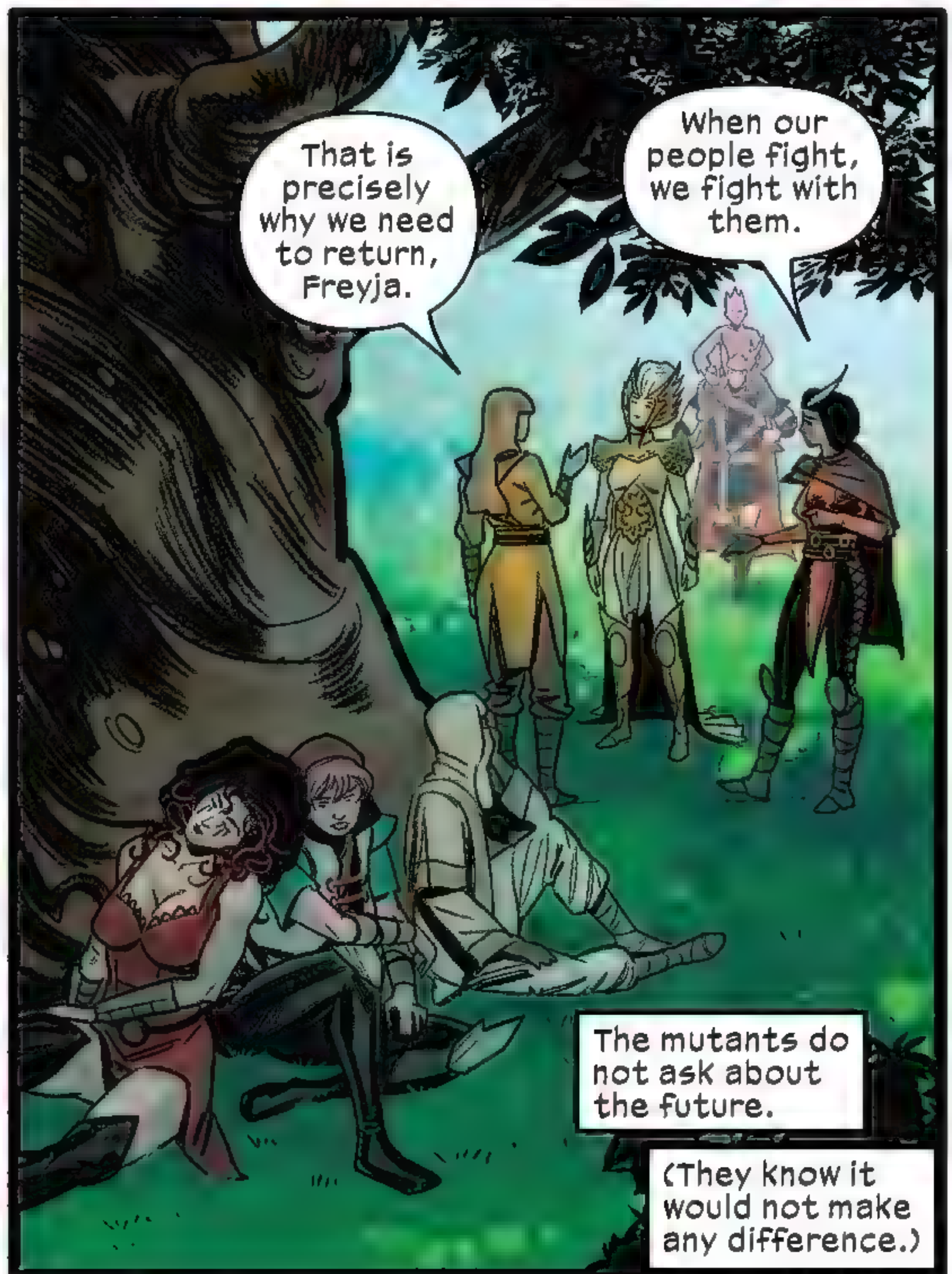


I have been wondering--

--what is an NPC, Curse?

--And for all intents and purposes, Krakoa is abandoned.

Midgard is not a safe place for mutants at the moment. You are being hunted.



That is precisely why we need to return, Freyja.

When our people fight, we fight with them.

The mutants do not ask about the future.

(They know it would not make any difference.)



The Bifrost will take you wherever you wish.

Then take us home.

Why do they call you King?

Well, I am king of Asgard.

Yeah, I don't see it. Maybe, like a court jester. Or, like...a groom of the stool.

For the love of all the goddamn gods, no more goodbyes. We're ready



Very well.

On behalf of Vanahelm, we thank you.

Until next time, my friends.

Sif!



On her king's orders, Sif sends them home.

They return to another fight. Another kind of war.

Awesome.

(And another adventure.)

The End.

Rebirth

Annotated by Frider Frostborn,
Current head librarian at the Library of Prophecy.

I write this as the Library of Prophecy turns into a Library of Unreliable Histories (most libraries are, to be fair).

In the days after the rebirth of our realm, I had the honor of consulting the mutants about the events that occurred before and during the battle. I asked them about specific turns in what we consider the most accurate of our recorded prophecies, and together, we managed to clarify the significance of several previously unknown stanzas. Yet some remain shrouded in mystery. Goddard once spent a month writing about clay pigeons. We believed they would be pertinent to the battle, but other than accidentally knocking out two guards in the hours before the war, we cannot see how they played any major part in the conflict.

Therein lies the problem with prophecy. Its purpose, assuming one subscribes to the idea that there is one, is about as hard to spot as a singular raindrop in a storm.

Yet it is what I do.

I asked the mutants if they wanted me to consult their futures before they returned home. Lady Mary answered that she would rather sit through a recreational root canal. I do not know exactly what that means, but she seemed to speak for them all.

I am relieved. Though our future stretches before us once more, theirs is clouded, and when I look into it, I do not understand the images I see. A white room. An island lonely. The anger and hurt of a family found.



Realm of X #1

by Stephanie Hans









Realm of X #1 Variant

by Chris Bachalo



Realm of X #1 Variant

by Karen S. Darboe
& Jim Campbell



Realm of X #2 Variant
by David Lopez



Realm of X #3 Variant
by Mike McKone
& Erick Arciniega



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X-Men: Hellfire Gala — Fall of X
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Stranded in Vanaheim!

Collecting:
Realm of X (2023) #1–4

Leaping straight from the astonishing aftermath of the Hellfire Gala, the unlikely group of Magik, Mirage, Marrow and Dust must somehow find a way to work alongside...Typhoid Mary! Even more confounding, the locals seem to believe that the mutants hold the key to fulfilling a prophecy that can either raise the realm to riches – or cause it to fall to ruin.

With Magik’s powers malfunctioning and a mysterious figure amassing power on the outskirts of Vanaheim, these X-Men are going to have to band together if they want to stay alive long enough to find their way home! Lost and at the end of her rope, Dani beseeches her former friends in Asgard for help – but will reinforcements arrive in time to turn the tide?

By:
Torunn Grønbekk, Diógenes Neves, Bruno Oliveira, Rafael Pimentel, Rain Beredo and Protobunker’s Dono Sánchez-Almara